Author's response to reviews

Title: Recurrence and mortality according to Estrogen Receptor status for breast cancer patients undergoing conservative surgery. Ipsilateral breast tumour recurrence dynamics provides clues for tumour biology within the residual breast.

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Version: 4 Date: 29 September 2010

Author's response to reviews:

Dear Dr Anthony Fyles

The manuscript Recurrence and mortality according to Estrogen Receptor status for breast cancer patients undergoing conservative surgery. Ipsilateral breast tumour recurrence dynamics provides clues for tumour biology within the residual breast has been revised following the remarks of the reviewers. In our opinion, the present version of the manuscript appears quite ameliorated.

Reviewer n° 1

The possible selection bias have been acknowledged by adding a further section (Page 16)

A Table describing trials was considered redundant, since all requested data (TNM, patient numbers, interventions and median follow-up) are reported in the text (Pages 4, 5, 7 and Table 1).

All Specific points were addressed by changes in the text (Pages 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 12, 13).

About preclinical data, the main traits of the relationship between primary tumour and metastasis have been studied during the past century and are the subject of a previous report = Demicheli R, Retsky MW, Hrushesky WJM, Baum M, Gukas ID: The effects of surgery on tumor growth: a century of investigations. Ann Oncol 2008;19:1821-1828 , while no report about molecular mechanisms have been till now published, at our knowledge.

Reviewer n° 2
The request of reaching better general clarity has been addressed by several changes in the text, primarily in the text of Abstract, Introduction, Results. The questions related to confidence intervals have been addressed in both the Patients and Methods section (Page 6) and in the Results section (Page 9). In particular, in the former sentence the role of sample size have been briefly treated.

The role of XRT on IBTR curves has been the subject of a previous report = Demicheli R, Ardoiino I, Boracchi P, Lozza L, Biganzoli E: Ipsilateral breast tumour recurrence (IBTR) dynamics in breast conserving treatments with or without radiotherapy Int J Radiat Biol, 2010; 86: 542–547.

The Abstract has been modified.

In the uploaded file, the previously submitted text where all changes are visible is followed by the resulting revised version.

We hope that the revised version will be accepted for publication.

Best regards,

Romano Demicheli