Reviewer's report

Title: Circulating endothelial cells are an early predictor of tumor response in renal cell carcinoma patients treated with sunitinib

Version: 5 Date: 28 March 2010

Reviewer: Paul de Souza

Reviewer's report:

Major revisions
The authors appear to have revised the paper according to previous criticisms. However, the difference in number of CEC estimations / monocyte counts / sVEGFR2 in the 6 non-responders and 20 responders still has not been clarified. This information could be added to Table 1. The implication in the revised text is that the number of estimations is the same between non-responders and responders, as only the baseline, Day 14 and Day 28 measurements are displayed. Nevertheless, it would be comforting to note that they are in fact the same.

One other comment I would make is that the statistical tests are all t-tests, but on looking at the graphs, the differences between the sub-groups are not particularly impressive, and there are some significant overlaps. The authors should probably comment on this as well.

Minor revisions
Similarly, the authors appear to have revised the paper according to previous criticisms, although the lead author is still not listed as the first author.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

No competing interests