Reviewer's report

Title: Role of the VEGF ligand to receptor ratio in the progression of mismatch repair-proficient colorectal cancer

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Reviewer: Andrew Vickers

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The authors have done a reasonable job of addressing two of the three criticisms. However, their response to a third criticism is inexcusable. They say: "It is challenging enough for pathologists with no access to biostatisticians and limited knowledge of statistics to perform regular ROC curve analysis that time-dependent ROC curves may be even more confusing." Now let's turn that around: imagine that I, as a statistician, went into a pathology lab, stained a bunch of slides wrong and was criticized by a pathologist on these grounds. How would it look if I said: "Pathology is very challenging for a statistician, and to get it right is even more confusing"?

Or how about telling a cancer patient: "sorry we did our research wrong, but we simply don't have the skills to do it right"?

The authors should remove the ROC analyses as I recommended, enter their variables in as continuous in e.g. Wilcoxon tests with vascular invasion as the group variable.