Reviewer's report

Title: Health status evaluation in 640 head and neck cancer survivors using EORTC QLQ-C30 and QLQ-H&N35 questionnaires

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Reviewer: Anne Kari Hersvik Aarstad

Reviewer's report:

The paper reports from a survey of 640 head and neck cancer patients successfully treated who have answered the EORTC QLQ C30/H&N35 questionnaires. The authors show conformal radiation therapy gave better QoL following treatment than conventional RT.

Major compulsory revisions:
1. The title does not reflect the content of the paper. The term health status should have been changed by Health-related Quality of life (HRQoL)
2. The introduction does not give an adequate introduction to the field. This is readily visible when the publication year of the references is noted. The introduction should be re-written.
3. How many patients are lost to follow up? How many patients did not agree to participate? How many could not answer intelligibly?
4. How were co-morbidities measured/determined?
5. The results of the EORTC C30 scores in the present publication (e.g. pain/fatigue) should be judged according to exclusion of coincidental differences. One idea could e.g. be to use sum scores. Anther possible approach could be to use a MANOVA test with several indexes included simultaneously to the analyses.
6. In particular, the regression analyses with global QoL could have been performed with multiple linear regression showing the relative importance of the different explaining variables.
7. Like the introduction, the discussion does not include a discussion to other contemporary research in the field.
8. Why xerostomia is discussed in detail is not well justified.
9. One interesting aspect is QoL differences related to site of the tumour. This could have been analysed in more detail.
10. Table 2 and 3 could be combined to one table.
11. Table 5 should be changed to be based on linear regression analyses.

Minor revisions:
1. The statistics text about clinically important differences as to QoL scores could be shortened.
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.