Reviewer's report

Title: Re-surgery plus chest wall re-irradiation for recurrent breast cancer - a second curative approach

Version: 2 Date: 21 January 2011

Reviewer: John Yarnold

Reviewer's report:

This is an important problem in oncology, as the authors make clear, and the article has the potential to add valuable information to the current body of knowledge.

Major compulsory revisions

Detailed information on the treatment volumes irradiated at first treatment and at re-treatment must be provided, for example, how is 'chest wall' defined, and in how many patients was the brachial plexus re-irradiated, and to what dose precisely?

More information on the proforma used to record late adverse effects would be useful, including the specific features that were recorded

Table 3 is inadequate. The number of patients assessed at defined (annual) time points must be given, including an actuarial analysis

Minor compulsory revisions

It is not possible to conclude that the re-treatment described here impacted on prognosis as defined by overall survival (final sentence of Discussion). Main rationale and value relates to local control and quality of life

Discretionary Revisions

Manuscript could be shortened, especially the Introduction

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'