Reviewer's report

**Title:** Process of distant lymph node metastasis in colorectal carcinoma: Implication of extracapsular invasion of lymph node metastasis

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 20 December 2010

**Reviewer:** seiichi takenoshita

**Reviewer's report:**

- **Major Compulsory Revisions**

As the authors described in the text, the identification of the ECI of the metastatic lymph nodes has been reported as a prognostic factor in patients with colorectal cancer. The aim of this paper is limited to investigating the correlation between the presence of ECI at the N1 site and nodal metastasis at the N2 site. Then, the authors should pay a special attention to the evaluation of the ECL and patients selection. The number of the patients with N1 metastasis is so small.

1. Two hundred and twenty-eight consecutive patients were enrolled. The author also described that they excluded patients with recurrent disease, neo-adjuvant chemotherapy, radiation, skipping lymph node metastases or incomplete clinical information. How many patients were performed with colorectal resection from 2007 to December 2009? The authors also need to explain the each number of patients excluded.

2. The authors did not discuss well on the 9 patients who had ECL but no N2 metastasis. As Komuta et al. described the three patterns of ECL (reference no. 6), are there any differences in the findings on microscopic features of ECI or on other clinicopathological findings between the patients with ECI and N2 metastasis and the patients with ECI and without N2 metastasis?

3. The evaluation method of the ECI should be exactly explained in the text. Did the author perform entire examination of each lymph node to detect ECI?

4. In the Table 1, the authors used the chi-square test, however, the Fisher’s exact test should be applied as the numbers were so small.

5. In Fig. 1, it seems for me that 1a and 1b had ECI and 1c had no infiltration. Is the caption correct?

6. The impact of ECI on distant lymph node metastasis should be evaluated using a regression model.

- **Minor Essential Revisions**

In Results section, line 8: ‘lymphvascular’ is incorrect.

- **Discretionary Revisions**

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Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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.