Reviewer's report

Title: Expression and prognostic value of circulating angiogenic cytokines in pancreatic cancer

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Reviewer: Florian Lordick

Reviewer's report:

This very nicely designed and conducted study gives insight into the potential role of circulating angiogenic factors and cytokines for the prognosis of pancreatic cancer. This study is hypothesis-generating in a field where we urgently need more and better hypotheses in order to design new biology-driven trials for the multimodal treatment of localized disease.

However, the results make clear that the associations of circulating angiogenic factors with the prognosis of pancreatic cancer are very complex. Therefore, no simple conclusions can be drawn at this stage. This complexity is adequately discussed by the authors.

In general, this paper is very well written.

My comments are minor:

1) Introduction: when the authors cite the clinical studies performed on cetuximab and bevacizumab, they fail to cite the recently published randomized phase III trial on cetuximab (Philip et al. JCO 2010). They could instead skip the less conclusive randomized phase II study (Ref. 16: Cascinu et al. Lancet Oncol 2008).

2) Writing error page 9: “Together with these data our findings suggest that the lack of one predictive biomarker may be due the involvement…” should read “Together with these data our findings suggest that the lack of one predictive biomarker may be due to the involvement…”

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest 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.