Author's response to reviews

Title: Early dissemination of bevacizumab for advanced colorectal cancer: a prospective cohort study

Authors:

S. Yousuf Zafar (yousuf.zafar@duke.edu)
Jennifer L Malin (Jennifer.Malin@va.gov)
Steven C Grambow (steven.grambow@duke.edu)
David H Abbott (David.Abbott@va.gov)
Deborah Schrag (Deb_Schrag@dfci.harvard.edu)
Jane T Kolimaga (kolim001@mc.duke.edu)
Leah L Zullig (Leah.Zullig@va.gov)
Jane C Weeks (Jane_Weeks@dfci.harvard.edu)
Mona N Fouad (mfouad@uab.edu)
John Z Ayanian (ayanian@hcp.med.harvard.edu)
Robert Wallace (robert-wallace@uiowa.edu)
Katherine L Kahn (kahn@rand.org)
Patricia A Ganz (pganz@ucla.edu)
Paul Catalano (pcata@jimmy.harvard.edu)
Dee W West (Dee.West@cpic.org)
Dawn Provenzale (dawn.provenzale@duke.edu)

Version: 2 Date: 27 July 2011

Author's response to reviews: see over
July 27, 2011

Dear Editors,

We are pleased to resubmit our original article, "Early dissemination of bevacizumab for advanced colorectal cancer: a prospective cohort study," to BMC Cancer.

We have incorporated the important comments submitted by the reviewer, and have detailed those below:

Reviewer comments:

Minor Essential Revisions
1. Of some concern is the missing information percentage in the various questionnaire related topics dealing with the patients perceptions of chemotherapy side effects after discussion with their doctor, reading material exposure and discussion of clinical trials as outlined in table 4. The missing data amounted to between 25-35% of the study population which while acknowledged and adjusted for in the statistical analysis can be view as a limitation used to draw conclusions and should potentially not be included in the forest plot in figure 3 (items last, third from last and fourth from last on the chart).

We have removed the variables in question from the forest plot in Figure 3 as requested and have re-run the analysis. The newly-uploaded Figure 3 reflects this new analysis. Since those variables were not significant in unadjusted analysis, no change was seen in the results of the model (as expected).

2. The limitation of the missing data also needs to be highlighted in the results section under the heading of factors associated with bevacizumab uses in the third paragraph pertaining to this heading.

At the top of page 14 (end of Results section), we have commented that the variables in question were not included in the adjusted analysis due to missingness. Also, those variables were originally in a separate table; they have now been merged into Table 3.

Our study presents important, population-based data regarding dissemination of a novel agent after regulatory approval. This information is critical, especially in light of recent regulatory decisions related to bevacizumab in breast cancer. We greatly appreciate these comments from the reviewer, and we hope this manuscript has been improved as a result of their incorporation. We look forward to your decision.

Sincerely,

S. Yousuf Zafar, MD, MHS, on behalf of co-authors, for the CanCORS Consortium