Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 18 June 2011

Reviewer: Georgia S Demetriou

Reviewer's report:

The authors have clearly defined the objective of their study and the questions they seek to answer with this paper. They have outlined the short comings in previously published phase IV post marketing studies, which while they do provide insight into the use, side effects and outcomes of novel agents in the setting of every day oncology practice outside of the stringent clinical trial scenario, they are unable to demystify the uptake and use of these (pricey) novel agents across the spectrum of all patients for which they may be clinically indicated. This paper therefore offers insight into a broader aspect of the challenges that currently face oncologists and patients as well as the bias that the prescribing habits of treating oncologists can have on the treatment protocols that patients receive.

The methodology of the study is outlined in detail in the text and is appropriate for the question the authors seek to answer as it is based on the comprehensive data obtained from CanCORS. The full CanCORS cohort appears representative of the US SEER registry sample as stated by the authors, as the CanCORS participants did not differ from their corresponding SEER population by more than 8 percentage points in any important demographic characteristics. In fact the authors go on to highlight the fact that the stage distribution in this study (20% with advanced cancer) is consistent with that seen in the SEER registry, where patients with advanced colorectal cancer comprise 19% of all the patients. The diagrammatic representation of the methodology used to obtain the sample of patients included also assists in the clarity of defining the sample population. There is fully acknowledgement by the authors of work that they have built their study on.

The discussion of the results is clear and highlights the interesting observations and lessons that can be learnt from a study of this nature about the uptake of novel agents in everyday practice. The authors are cognizant of the limitations of the data acknowledging that this is a sub population of a larger study and that the follow up period was short, yet the deductions drawn offer insight into the defined question posed by this manuscript and reports on a previously unreported aspect of novel agent use in the treatment of patients with advanced colorectal cancer.

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).

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.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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