Reviewer's report

Title: Phase II Study of Weekly Paclitaxel and Capecitabine in Patients with Metastatic or Recurrent Esophageal Squamous Cell Carcinoma

Version: 2 Date: 8 June 2011

Reviewer: Laurent Bedenne

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Major compulsory revision:

It should be added in the exclusion criteria “patients unable to swallow the capecitabin tablets, even after placement of a stent”. This seems evident but underlines a drawback of this type of treatment in esophageal cancer. The degree of dysphagia, if known, should be added in table 1.

It would be most interesting to precise in the discussion the number of patients otherwise eligible who were excluded for dysphagia, and hence discuss the advantage of capecitabin over infusional 5FU-leucovorin.

Minor essential revisions:

1- Page 10 “Efficacy”: line 13 “two patients out of three”, and line 14 “one patient out of six”….achieved partial response…The efficacy of PACE seems to be more than “slightly lower” in patients previously treated by docetaxel, which is not quite surprising.

2- Page 11 Safety and tolerability: delete lines 2 and 3 (redundant); delete the commentaries which have their place in the discussion, i.e line 5 “but easily manageable”, and the last sentence line 9-10.

3- Page 11 Discussion: the sentence line 5-6 does not seem essential, as it repeats a sentence of the previous paragraph.

4- Still 2 figures after the dot in figures 1 and 2

5- In table 6 use SCC rather than SQC

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.