Reviewer's report

Title: Brain metastases from breast cancer: prognostic significance of HER-2 overexpression, effect of trastuzumab and cause of death

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Reviewer: Shaheenah Dawood

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Review: “Brain metastases from breast cancer: prognostic significance of HER2 overexpression, effect of trastuzumab and cause of death”

Scodan et al present the results of study that looks at the prognostic outcome of women with breast cancer and brain metastases stratified by HER2 status and trastuzumab treatment. The paper is well written and adds to growing literature in this field. My comments are as follows:

1. The authors calculate and report the progression free survival of brain mets. Since the timing of CT /MRI for assessment of brain met progression were not conducted at the same time in all patients lead time bias is introduced and this should be discussed in the discussion section of the manuscript. One of the main objectives of this study was to also assess cause of death and thus biases involved in its determination should be discussed.

2. Do the authors have information on how many of the patients went on to recieve lapatinib upon development of brain mets?

3. Do the authors have the data to calculate the time to development of brain metastases stratified by her2 status. It would be interesting to see if trastuzumab affects this parameter especially since the majority received trastuzumab before development of brain metastases.

4. For figure one please insert the numbers at risk.

5. There are too many tables. the authors may consider consolidating some of the results.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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'