Reviewer’s report

Title: Protein induced by vitamin K absence or antagonist-II production is a strong predictive marker for extrahepatic metastases in hepatocellular carcinoma: a prospective evaluation

Version: 1 Date: 28 June 2011

Reviewer: Hisanori Shiomi

Reviewer’s report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The authors doesn’t show the state of the extra hepatic metastasis clearly, though they highlighted on it in their title. The population of the patients with extrahepatic metastasis in each groups, and correlation with PIVLA-II level, that is their point, can’t be reached from their data.

2. In “all patients” analysis, the authors didn’t show the state of the tumor size, number of the tumor, extra hepatic metastasis, micro vessel invasion, and many other factors are lacking.

3. The authors mentioned that “association of PIVKA-II with extra hepatic metastasis was maintained in the subgroup analyses”, but not in BCLC stage B (Table 4).

4. In the 2nd paragraph of Discussion, the authors described that “In addition, our study demonstrated that PIVKA-II level ~ portal vain thrombosis and invasion”, but not in BCLC stage B (Table 4).

5. The authors had better to mention about the cut off level of the AFP and PIVKA-II. Since their populations are relatively large, they can describe that they are certain value showing receiver operating characteristic curve.

- Minor Essential Revisions

1. Do the patients who are taking warfarin contain in this group?

2. The manuscript contains 10 figures, but figure legends are only from figure 1 to 4.

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.