Reviewer's report

Title: Survival endpoints in colorectal cancer. The effect of second primary other cancer on disease free survival.

Version: 1 Date: 23 May 2011

Reviewer: Amy Downing

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions

This is an interesting article but I find it difficult to follow in some parts and feel that the results need to be presented in a clearer way. There is a lot of discussion around the shape of the curves for figure 1; it would be better to simplify this and focus on the main, clear differences (it is difficult to know if some of the described differences are actually significant).

The background information also needs to be made clearer. It would help to give some examples of survival endpoints and how they can differ. The aims should also be more explicit about the survival endpoints included in the study.

In the discussion, the authors pick out 2 studies and focus on their endpoint definitions - why these studies? It would be interesting to see a comparison of, say 10, recent studies and the differences amongst them.

Minor essential revisions

Background, paragraph 4: Clarify the statements 'DFS offers earlier presentation of data. Besides, there are more events in DFS than OS.'

Statistical methods, paragraph 1: TTF is included in Table 1 but not mentioned in the study. Why was this comparison not included?

Same paragraph: 'CSS was measured from the date of surgery to the date of death in CRC' - should be 'from CRC'

Results, paragraph 1: Add %s to the descriptive figures

Discussion: Paragraphs 2 & 3 are related and should be combined.

Discussion, paragraph 5: The sentence beginning 'A recent publication has been suggested that... ' does not make sense and should be clarified.

Figures: Is it possible to reorder the endpoint labels to follow the lines on the graphs (e.g. follow Fig 1a - so that the order would be CSS, TTR...) This may help when trying to follow the differences described in the results.

Figure 2 could be omitted and just described in a sentence or 2 - there are a lot of figures to make sense of and I'm not sure this one is necessary.
Discretionary revisions

The abstract does not mention any of the differences between the endpoints, it only focuses on the second primary cancers.

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

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests