Reviewer's report

Title: Circulating endothelial cells and other angiogenesis factors in pancreatic carcinoma patients receiving gemcitabine chemotherapy

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Reviewer: Moritz Koch

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Kondo et al. examined in their study the prognostic relevance of CEC and their association with proangiogenic cytokines in the plasma of patients with pancreatic cancer.

Although dealing with a small sample size the study demonstrated quite new and interesting results. However, I have some major and minor revisions/concerns:

1. The authors should better clarify their control group of healthy volunteers. It becomes not entirely clear what the control group consists of. This needs to be clarified.

2. The authors only show a statistical association between proangiogenic plasma factors and CEC. The prognostic significance for CEC is also shown but no clear analysis regarding the clinical significance of the measured angiogenic plasma factors is presented. Why not? Instead of showing Kaplan Meier curves the authors present some misleading correlations between plasma factors and different disease stages.

3. Figures 3 and 4 should be omitted as they only show minor results. They should be replaced by Kaplan Meier curves showing the association between plasma cytokine and prognosis of the included patients.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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

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'