Reviewer's report

Title: Combination chemotherapy of intermittent erlotinib with pemetrexed for pretreated patients with advanced non-small cell lung cancer: a phase I dose-finding study.

Version: 1 Date: 4 April 2012

Reviewer: Lucio Crinò

Reviewer's report:

The authors should address the following minor issues:

- Specify among the inclusion criteria if pretreatment with first-line chemo had to be platinum-based
- More speculation on the fact that the two pts with activating EGFR mutations did not respond (antagonistic effect of pem/erlotinib in EGFR-mutants? This would, in turn open a niche for this combination in the EGFR-WT subgroup only, where the poor RRs observed with erlotinib seems to be greatly improved from 3.3% to 30%)
- Inadequate comparison with activity results from phase III trials (see discussion).
  # We are comparing 12 pts with hundreds of pts!
  # Activity is a secondary end-point in a phase I study. Activity results should be more deeply discussed in the subsequent phase II study

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:

No conflict interest declared