Reviewer's report

Title: Is there a role of whole-body bone scan in patients with esophageal squamous cell carcinoma

Version: 2 Date: 3 June 2012

Reviewer: Xian-shu GAO

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1. General Comments:
Most of the questions I posed have been well defined by authors, which are sound and logical. However several issues still need to be answered.

2. Major Compulsory Revision

(1) I do not think Comments 3 of Major Compulsory Revision in my previous report was well defined by author.

In the manuscript the author retrospectively evaluated the radiographic and scintigraphic images of 360 esophageal squamous cell carcinoma patients, in which 33 cases were confirmed to have bone metastases eventually and 327 cases were not (in Figure 1). Please supplement survival data comparatively between 33 cases and 327 cases.

(2) “For patients with equivocal findings during initial radiological examination, further radiological follow-up is necessary to confirm bone metastasis” (Line 3-5 of Confirmation of Bone Metastases in Methods)

Please clearly indicate the time interval between the “equivocal finding” and “further radiological follow-up”. And please explain the reason of adopting that time interval.

3. Minor Essential Revision

(1) Since bone recurrence was clearly defined at Line 6-9 in Confirmation of Bone Metastases in Methods, bone “recurrence-free survival” is recommended instead of “freedom from bone recurrence”.

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

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests