Reviewer’s report

Title: Tumor size as measured at initial X-ray examination, not length of bile duct stricture, predicts survival in patients with unresectable pancreatic cancer

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Reviewer: Naoki Ikenaga

Reviewer’s report:

In 132 unresectable pancreatic cancer cases, the author measured tumor sizes using US or CT, and found that tumor’s large diameter correlated with poor prognosis. While the study does make novel findings which state that length of bile duct stricture caused by pancreatic tumor growth did not affect patient survival, the results of the study are largely uninteresting. The method of study used in this manuscript was not executed well. This manuscript is not suitable for publication in BMC cancer.

Points:

1) The authors used different modality including US or CT to measure the largest tumor diameter. This could lead to different measurement outcomes. Also, the author should mention how they correctly measured length, width and depth of tumors by CT (How thick was a slice of CT? Was 3D CT used?).

2) The authors defined P<0.05 as significant difference. However, they describe the hazard ratio for tumor size in multivariate analysis which showed P=0.05 as significant. It looks unreasonable.

3) The sentence “It is concluded that … …with a measurable tumor (Page 8 line 6-9)”. Should be expressed more clearly.

4) It’s difficult to understand the Three different subjects (location, liver metastasis, and gemcitabine treatment) should not be in the same list. The arrangement of them should be changed.

5) P values should be included in each picture (Figure 3,4,5)

Level of interest: An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

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