Reviewer's report

Title: Genotypic and phenotypic analysis of male breast cancer shows under representation of the HER2 and basal subtypes in BRCA-associated carcinomas.

Version: 3 Date: 3 August 2012

Reviewer: Laura Ottini

Reviewer's report:

The paper by Siddhartha Deb and coworkers investigated the genotypic and phenotypic features of familial male breast cancer.

In this paper, the Authors show that clinicopathological features of breast cancer in BRCA1/2 male carriers and BRCAX families differ from that of breast cancer in females and suggest a possible BRCA2 phenotype of micropapillary histological subtype.

The results presented in this paper are of great interest on the field and provide additional data on the characterization of BRCA-associated MBC subtypes. However, their relevance is limited by major problems related the small number of cases included. The authors should discuss their results taking into consideration the results reported by previous studies on larger series of MBC (i.e. Ottini et al Breast Cancer Res Treat. 2012). Due to the small number of cases analyzed in this study, statistical associations may be underestimated and some associations may be missing. The authors should discuss this limitation of their study.

Overall, the content of the manuscript is comprehensive.

I would suggest some minor essential revisions.

• Attention should be made to typing errors (i.e. double )) and %%) within the text, tables and references and to the discrepancy of the number of cases reported in the text and in the tables (i.e. number of IDCs with micropapillary component; number of cases analyzed for HER2 status).

• The quality of the figures should be improved (i.e. in the figure 5a the cell morphology cannot be distinguished) and in general a larger magnification is needed (i.e. fig 2a, b, d).

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests