Reviewer's report

Title: Calpain system protein expression in carcinomas of the pancreas, bile duct and ampulla

Version: 1 Date: 10 June 2012

Reviewer: Neil Merrett

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1. Numbers in table 1 do not add up. Only 67 in tumour size
2. Numbers in table 2 do not add up. 120 patients in cohort but age has 118, tumour size 118, t stage 119, n stage 113, vascular invasion 118, perineural 119, tumour site 120. These inconsistencies must be addressed.
3. in the methods, i am uncertain of what numbers are being used in the cohorts. eg it states that in the pancreatic cohort, 27 of 53 recieved adjuvent chemo. But there are 68 patients in the cohort. What happened to the other 15 patients. did they recieve neoadjuvent or DXRT or why were they not included
4 Similarly for the cholan=gio and ampullry tuimours, there are 120 patients but the text only refers to 20 of 72 recieving adjuvent therapy

The study finds that low expression is asscoiated with worse outcomes in both cohorts, but the study also finds that high expression is associated with higher stage and vascular invasion. This seems counterintuitive and further discussion of these two findings would benefit the paper.

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

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