Reviewer’s report

Title: Intraoperative Electron Radiation Therapy (IOERT) in the Management of Locally Recurrent Rectal Cancer

Version: 1 Date: 6 August 2012

Reviewer: Michael G Haddock

Reviewer’s report:

This is a retrospective review of a challenging group of patients treated with curative intent therapy. The question is well defined and the methods of analysis and statistical interpretation are appropriate. The limited world literature is nicely summarized in the discussion.

Major Compulsory Revisions: none

Minor Essential Revisions:
1. Change "curative intended therapy" to "curative intent therapy" in multiple locations.
2. Change "table x" to "Table x" in multiple locations.
3. Given that unirradiated patients are often treated with 50.4 Gy in 28 fractions and the finding that preoperative irradiation was associated with complete resection, what was the reason for limiting the dose to 41.4 Gy? Is this the recommended dose for this group of patients in the future?
4. Neuropathy was observed in 8% of patients. In other series, the frequency and severity of neuropathy was associated with IOERT dose. Was there any relationship to IOERT dose or overall dose in this series?
5. A statement regarding the limitations of a retrospective analysis should be added to the discussion.

Discretionary Revisions: none

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:

I declare that I have no competing interests