Reviewer's report

Title: The predictive value of microRNA-126 in relation to first line treatment with capecitabine and oxaliplatin in patients with metastatic colorectal cancer

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Reviewer: hans morreau

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The authors investigated microRNA-126 levels in blood vessels in CRC tissue by means of in_situ hybridization combined with image analysis. The authors related scoring in low or high expression levels to the number of metastatic sites and to response upon treatment with first line XELOX. A higher median PFS with high expression in endothelial cells was found than in tumours with low expression. There are several issues that are discussed by the authors: 1) The impact of microRNA-126 in relation to prognostic versus predictive importance. 2) Apart from being expressed in endothelial cells microRNA-126 is not clearly expressed in tumour epithelial cells (see also ref 9).

Is the question posed by the authors well defined? YES

Are the methods appropriate and well described? YES. The approach chosen by the authors is valid since only localized expression in specific cells can be taken into account.

Are the data sound? About the visualization and scoring of microRNA-126 expression exemplified in Figure 1: Can the authors discuss why the expression level of microRNA-126 is not merely a reflection of differential amounts of vessels in the tumours. If each vessel expresses similar amounts of microRNA-126 the discussion of its role in vessel integrity might be less valid.

Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? YES

Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? Preferably you would like to have some more biological insight other than through speculation what would be the reason for the associations found.

Are limitations of the work clearly stated? The data presented in the manuscript might conflict with data in the literature regarding microRNA-126 and prognosis. This is discussed by the authors.

Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? YES

Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? YES

Is the writing acceptable? YES
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I have no competing interests