Reviewer's report

**Title:** Long-term prospective longitudinal evaluation of emotional distress and quality of life in cervical cancer patients

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 22 January 2013

**Reviewer:** polat dursun

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Mantegna et al. provide the results of 2-years prospective, longitudinal study evaluating emotional distress and QoL issues in a large series of early stage (ECC) and locally advanced (LACC) cervical cancer patients undergoing radical surgery (RS) or pre-operative chemoradiation (CT/RT).

In this study, patients were evaluated by the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS), the Global Health Status scale of EORTC QLQ-C30 (GHS) and the EORTC QLQ-CX24 (CX24) questionnaire at baseline, and after 3, 6, 12 and 24 months from surgery.

Anxiety scores showed a statistically significant early (3 months after surgery) improvement which persisted until 24-month evaluation.

No significant changes over time were observed during the study time frame in term of Depression levels. Focusing on QoL issues, GHS and Sexual Activity scores showed an improvement over time in both groups; on the other hand Body Image scores were significantly impaired by CT/RT administration without long-term recovery in LACC patients. In both groups, lymphedema (LY) and menopausal symptoms (MS) scores showed an early worsening which persisted 2-year after surgery.

Finally, the authors concluded that “Despite a significant improvement over time of mean scores, 24-month after surgery pathologic Anxiety levels are still detectable in approximately 10% of patients, emphasizing the need to establish systematic long term psychological interventions. More attention should be focused on surgical/medical approaches able to minimize the negative impact of LY and MS on QoL.”

This is a very well designed study and QoL is a rarely investigated topic in gynecologic cancer survivors. I have just a few suggestion for the authors as below;

-As I understood this is a second publication in a well desinedg prospective study of same group.


If it is a second publication, therefore, it would be more appropriate if the authors emphasized this in the material and method sections.

- How many of the patients in the early stage group treated with radical surgery received adjuvant radiotherapy, or chemoradiotherapy?

- How many of the patients received any kind of anti-depressant or other similar drugs?

- RT may have important negative impact on the vaginal elasticity and sexual scores. Were there any differences among the groups with respect to sexual scores?


**Level of interest:** An article of outstanding merit and interest 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 declare that I have no competing interests'