Reviewer's report

Title: Study protocol of the B-CAST study: a multicenter, prospective cohort study investigating the tumor biomarkers in adjuvant chemotherapy for stage III colon cancer

Version: 1 Date: 18 December 2012

Reviewer: Eva Segelov

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

The author must respond to these before a decision on publication can be reached. For example, additional necessary experiments or controls, statistical mistakes, errors in interpretation.

-Since this paper reports study protocol, and no results, further detail on methods is appropriate. The methods state that a tissue block was taken from the primary tumour immediately after surgery. Was this by the surgeon or the pathologist at cut up? Were there any guidelines as to which part of the primary tumour should be sampled? More details would be helpful as this block was wholly digested for DNA/RNA analysis. Was there any QA eg on adjacent blocks, to see if the majority of the tissue frozen was tumour? Whas there a subset in which two blocks were taken from the primary tumour to verify similar results?

-Should be an explanation of why/why not there is no influence on the biomarkers of oxaliplatin in combination v those treated with FU derivatives alone.

-Is there a standard protocol for post-adjuvant treatment monitoring?- this may affect DFS as the timing of reporting of asymptomatic relapse relates to the frequency of investigations, hence this should be specified in the protocol

-More details on the analysis plan once all the biomarkers have been evaluated is needed. Will there be a multivariate analysis? The protocol does not report collection of basic demographic data eg age, comorbidities which influences DFS.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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