Reviewer’s report

**Title:** The impact of chemotherapy-associated neutrophil/lymphocyte counts on the efficacy of adjuvant chemotherapy in colorectal cancer

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 7 September 2012

**Reviewer:** Athanasios Kotsakis

**Reviewer’s report:**

**Major comments**

1) Is it a prospective or retrospective study?

2) It is not reported anything about the duration of lymphopenia. Was that factor significant for the clinical outcome? It should be mentioned.

3) It is also not reported what was the doses of 5FU and oxaliplatin which were used for the treatment of the patients. Was there a standard dose common for all patients? What was the treatment provided to the patients with neutropenia? Was there any difference in the clinical outcome between the patients developed neutropenia only compared to those with neutropenic infection?

4) The authors should discuss about the possible mechanisms which may explain their observation. It is not understandable how a transient lymphopenia could be a predictive marker for those patients. How many of those patients had low (≤0.66) absolute number of lymphocytes before treatment? How many of those patients had rectal cancer which means more complex treatment (chemoradiation)?

5) In the table 2 is shown that CEA, stage of the disease and lymphopenia are independent prognostic variables for DFS. What is the percentage of patients who had all of those negative prognostic factors?

**Minor comments**

1) English should be improved

2) Figures 1 and 2 are not so clear

3) Table 1 should be more comprehensive. It needs improvement, by using bold or italics as headings, in order to become easy readable.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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