Reviewer's report

Title: Association Between Delayed Initiation of Adjuvant CMF or Anthracycline-based Chemotherapy and Survival in Breast Cancer: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis

Version: 3 Date: 9 April 2013

Reviewer: Dorte Lisbet Nielsen

Reviewer's report:

Concerning comment:
The authors state that only “high validity” studies are included in the meta-analysis, however, they include the study by Samur et al. (negative study not fulfilling the inclusion criteria).

The response: The study is included to increase the reliability of positive results of the meta-analysis.

I don’t agree - including one (selected) negative study does not increase any reliability (selection bias?). In the “Discussion section” it is stated that other negative studies (Reference 28-30) are not included due to low validity. It is not clear for me what is the difference between these studies and the study by Samur et al.?

In case the authors include the study by Samur et al. they should provide a list of excluded studies, including the specific reason why these studies are excluded (not just “low validity”).

Other comments: OK

When re-reviewing the manuscript we would also be grateful if you could comment on whether the authors' results can be broadly applied in the clinic. One of the other referees suggested to us that the manuscript might be better suited to our subject-specific sister journal BMC Cancer because the chemotherapy regimens the authors assess are no longer widely used.

I completely agree with the suggestion of the other referee.

We asked the authors to discuss the medical implications of their results in the discussion section, and would greatly appreciate it if you could comment on the generalizability of the findings.

As stated by the other reviewer the regimens are no longer widely used. Thus, the generalizability might be limited. The authors now discuss taxane-based regimens.