Reviewer's report

**Title:** Prognosis of Rectal Cancer Patients improves analog to Downstaging by intensified neoadjuvant Radiochemotherapy - a matched pair analysis

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 21 April 2013

**Reviewer:** Jianmin Xu

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Authors compared rectal patients with and without intensified neoadjuvant radiochemotherapy, and found that neoadjuvant radiochemotherapy shows a high rate of tumor regression, and the same local and systemic tumor control as control group with a primary more favorable tumor stage.

Although with certain significance, there are some problems as following.

**Major Compulsory Problems:**
1. Authors should state that are there different or same adjuvant therapy after rectal surgery between the 2 groups, because it is important element affecting prognosis.
2. In the 4th paragraph of Result, authors should state what are the exact 5- and 10- year survival data.

**Minor Essential Revisions:**
1. The title “Prognosis of Rectal Cancer Patients improves analog to Downstaging by intensified neoadjuvant Radiochemotherapy - a matched pair analysis” is not clear, especially what “analog to” means.
2. In results of abstract, “the actuarial cancer related and disease free survival was 67.9% and 70.4%” does means “5-year”?
3. In 2nd paragraph of Patients and methods, “irinotecan (initially 6 times, weekly, 40mg/m2; later 4 times, week 1, 2, 4, and 5 with 60mg/m2)” is not clear.
4. In Statistical analysis, “Statistical analysis was done using Pearson`s chi-square test of Fisher`s exact test” may be not right.
5. In 4th paragraph of Results, “However, UICC-stage dependent survival benefits of the UICC 0-III (Figure 2) versus UICC stage IV (Figure 4) become apparent” should state the exact survival data.
6. The figures showed disordered arrangement. For example, Figure 1, 2 and 4 can be renamed as Figure 1a, 1b and 1c.
7. The first 2 sentences in Conclusions can be redesigned as the last paragraph in Discussion.
8. In Table1, “Age” needs add “(mean or median)”.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely
related research interests

**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.