Reviewer's report

Title: A unifying Concept for periampullary Adenocarcinomas from retrospective clinico-pathologic Analysis of 198 Patients

Version: 1 Date: 4 July 2013

Reviewer: William Greenhalf

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

Given the relatively small numbers of patients involved it is absolutely essential to give the at risk figures underneath the Kaplan-Meyer curves in Figure 2.

“Immunohistochemistry was carried out using commercially available antibodies for cytokeratin 7 (CK7), cytokeratin 20 (CK20), and caudal type homeobox 2 (CDX2)" I’d like to know supplier and catalogue number please.

“Few patients had received neoadjuvant therapy before resection (7%)” This sounds like quite a lot to me. What was the breakdown of these patients? – i.e. how many were PDAC?

Presumably the statement that “Presence of a precursor lesion was significantly associated with better survival." Can only fit with “However, the subgroup of PDAC with associated IPMN did not show significantly better survival than PDAC without associated IPMN (p=0.538, Logrank test).” If the alternative cancer forms were both more associated with precursor lesions and better survival. Why not test this and say so? Although, perhaps this doesn’t fit nicely with the conclusion that “However, given the results of our study, the biologically valid and logistically preferable approach would be to distinguish between INT and PB differentiation rather than tumor location.”

Minor Essential Revisions

I think that it should be made clear that Pancreatic Ductal Adenocarcinoma is not the only form of “pancreatic cancer”. Can I suggest “The present WHO classification of tumors distinguishes between pancreatic (PDAC), extrahepatic (distal) bile duct (DBDAC)" should read “The present WHO classification of tumors distinguishes between pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma (PDAC, referred to here as just pancreatic cancer), extrahepatic (distal) bile duct (DBDAC)

“Another aspect is the question for the biological basis of the observed differences” should read “Another aspect is the question of the biological basis of the observed differences”

“All cases with sufficiently available FFPE were included in the study” should read “All cases with sufficient available FFPE were included in the study.”
“a standardized protocol was followed for diagnostic workup of pancreatoduodenectomy specimen” should read “a standardized protocol was followed for diagnostic workup of pancreatodudenectomy specimens”

Discretionary Revisions

This may be my ignorance – but I am not sure what is meant by “oral, aboral and deep resection margin”.

I think LNR as an abbreviation for Lymph Node Ratio needs to be defined.

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

**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