Reviewer’s report

Title: Class III beta-tubulin is a predictive marker for taxane-based chemotherapy in recurrent and metastatic gastric cancer

Version: 2 Date: 23 June 2013

Reviewer: Diana English

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Major compulsory revisions
1. Another means of validating the TUBB3 and ERCC1 expression in samples would improve the quality of the paper such as use of RT-PCR instead of the use of only immunohistochemistry.

2. Comments in the discussion on other studies in the literature looking at the correlation of TUBB3 with clinical outcome in gastric cancer patients managed with other taxane based regimens e.g (Taxanes and capecitabine) would add to the paper.

Minor Essential Revisions
1. The tumor samples examined for TUBB3 and ERCC1 expression were that of samples taken at diagnosis. I assume this means the primary diagnosis and as such one wonders if the recurrent tumors would be expected to have the same TUBB3 and ERCC1 expression?

This concern and others are almost unavoidable in retrospective studies. Could the authors please comment?

2. How did the authors ensure that no cases were missed in the medical record review?

3. Following on the above point, can the authors include more of a discussion on the limitations of their study?

Discretionary revisions

1. A comment on the need for a randomized control trial with determination of TUBB3 and ERCC1 status upfront followed by administration of treatment regimens may likely be one of the best approaches to identifying the true significance of these markers in prognosis for gastric cancer. Also a randomized trial may account for confounding variables not addressed in this study such as patient’s performance status.

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.