Reviewer's report

**Title:** Influence of zoledronic acid on disseminated tumor cells in bone marrow and survival: results of a prospective clinical trial

**Version:** 1 **Date:** 7 May 2013

**Reviewer:** Judith R R Kroep

**Reviewer's report:**

- **Major Compulsory Revisions**
  1) Material and Methods: please add statistics/power analysis made before study start.
  2) Please add in the discussion the limitations of the work, eg the relative small patient number.

- **Minor Essential Revisions**
  1) abstract: please add study design (open-label, multicenter trial) and time frame that study has been conducted
  2) Introduction, last sentence p5: change 'the effects of ZOL on DTC had not been' in 'the effects of ZOL on DTC have not been'
  3) results, patients' characteristics, 2nd paragraph: change 'clinical data' in 'patients' characteristics'
  4) Discussion, antitumorigenic effects of bisphosphonates, line 13: please change 'in this study' into 'in that study'
  5) Table 1: inclusion criteria included only patients with DTC-positive bone marrow. Then how can the DTC counts at diagnosis range between 0 and ...?
  6) In the discussion various possible mechanism behind the influence of Zol on DTC were summarized. Do the current data give additional information about the mechanism behind the anti-tumor effect of zoledronic acid?

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

Q: Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this paper, either now or in the future? yes
Sponsoring of a clinical trial with zoledronic acid by Novartis