Reviewer’s report

Title: Brain metastasis from hepatocellular carcinoma: the role of surgery as a prognostic factor

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Reviewer: Seung Ho Yang

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The authors emphasized the role of surgical intervention for the treatment of brain metastasis of HCC. They discussed the prognostic significance of Child-Plug classification, intratumoral bleeding, age, the interval between HCC diagnosis and brain metastasis, the number of brain metastasis, and treatment modalities.

Here, I would like to ask and address the major points.

1. Efficacy of surgical intervention
   The authors should show the indication (or guidelines) of resection of HCC brain metastasis.
   Even though the resection of single lesion is considered, patients’ condition such as poor liver function could interrupt the surgical intervention.
   If physician’s and patients’ preference affect the decision of craniotomy or radiation therapy, etc, the efficacy of aggressive surgical intervention cannot be generalized.

2. Survival of brain metastasis from HCC
   It is generally accepted that the survival of patients with brain metastasis depends on the status of the primary disease. The treatment of HCC after the resection or radiation for brain lesions could affect OS.
   Especially, during 2001 through 2012, new target agents have been introduced in Korea. It is more convincing to analysis the survival data according to treatment modalities of HCC and the status of HCC.

My minor concerns are as below.

1. How is the tumor control after RS and/or WBRT?
   Median OS of 10.4 weeks was achieved after GKS and WBRT. Is it possible to assess the outcomes with this short duration?
   I don’t think that survival is the reasonable standard to evaluate the efficacy of RS or WBRT.

2. What is the possible reason for longer survival in patients without intratumoral bleeding?
3. What is the rationale of cut off value, 400ng/ml AFP?

4. Cytogenetic analysis of subgroups and definition of responders are more informative.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.