Reviewer's report

Title: Long-term outcome and impact of maintenance therapy in patients with advanced sarcoma treated with trabectedine. An analysis of 181 patients of the French ATU compassionate use program

Version: 1 Date: 25 September 2012

Reviewer: David Thomas

Reviewer's report:

This report describes the experience on a French compassionate access program for trabectedin for advanced sarcomas. There are some interesting observations made, notably a suggestion that maintenance therapy may provide a survival benefit. It is my experience, and that of colleagues elsewhere, that trabectedin in some cases produces striking prolonged disease control (often in the absence of RECIST responses).

Major Compulsory Revisions
1. Hospitalization for toxicity and survival: Discussion, p9, para 3, sentence 3: remove probably, replace with perhaps. The reality is that performance status due to cancer stage may confound decisions to admit for treatment toxicity. It is of interest, because some toxicities correlate with therapeutic efficacy--apparently not here. But this is possibly due to the limited data available.
2. Results, p8, para 2: define complementary. Do you mean: additional?
3. please specifically compare the outcomes described here with the EORTC reference data in your discussion, stratified if possible by subtype. In particular, is the median PFS and OS for the patients in this study different from that in the 'active agent' cohort within the van Glabbeke & Blay studies (JCO, 1999; EJC, 2003). I am particularly interested to know whether the differences in outcomes for trabectedin relate to the median or the extreme group of long term survivors.

Minor Essential Revisions
There are a number of typographical errors:
commas and full stops in numbers
p4, para 2; remove ? after program
p7, para 1: remove double full stops; para 2: was were--change to was; para 3: progressive disease should be PD, not SD
p11: legends, 1C: whowhole
Table 1: insert No category data for both metastatic categories for comparison

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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