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: 5 November 2012

Reviewer: George Laking

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Minor Essential Revisions

1. The actual schedule of trabectadin used is identified only in the Discussion. It must be stated in the Methods section, particularly in light of the RCT result comparing a 24-hour with a 3-hour schedule.

2. There are a number of small errors of punctuation and formatting, for example:
   a) some use of commas instead of decimal points
   b) use of bullet points at the end of the introduction seems superfluous
   c) second bullet point paragraph at top of page 4, first sentence ends with a question mark.
   d) variable spelling, trabectadin / trabectadine -- should be one or the other to be consistent.
   e) "liver/ling" should be "liver/lung"
   f) "cycles" is preferable to "courses" when describing the treatment of these patients. The current draft uses both terms inconsistently.
   g) please ensure clear definitions are given for all acronyms, e.g. "EORTC-STBSG".
   h) adjectives in English do not have to be made plural when the noun is plural.
   i) Table 3 (and check elsewhere) -- it is better to put a 0 before each decimal point.

3. Initial reference to the relevant RCT is as STS201, subsequent reference is to "the EORTC trial", and "EORTC Phase II study". It should be identified in a consistent way throughout the text.

Discretionary Revisions

1. Use of the term "compassionate use". Although this term is prevalent, it is debatable whether there is really any compassion involved. "Pre-registration (or pre-licensing or pre-marketing) access program" would seem a more accurate description that avoids the moral overtones of compassion.

2. "impact of treatment duration on treatment efficacy". I don't think this study can
aim to measure an "impact" in this way, the best it can do is identify an association. I would say "association of treatment duration with treatment efficacy".

3. Is the Demetri et al paper published yet? (SUCCEED trial)

4. It might be worth writing a couple more lines to defend the integrity of the report, given that only 55% of the population could be evaluated.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.