Reviewer's report

Title: A retrospective analysis of survival and prognostic factors of male breast cancer from a single center

Version: 3 Date: 1 February 2014

Reviewer: tiffany berry

Reviewer's report:

Dear Editor,

The above article discussing male breast cancer is acceptable in my opinion for publication pending the following changes:

Major Compulsory Changes-

- there are several occasions where Tumor "Stage" should more accurately be stated as tumor "size" (p2 line 18, p7, line 8, page 9 line 8)
- need to explain why all patients received an axillary dissection rather than sentinel node as sentinel node is standard of care in the years the data was collected (at least in the US and Europe) as noted on page 5, line 23.
- need to explain why so many patients received radiation and chemotherapy as above 90% is high as an overall rate (page 7, line 12).
- the highlights of the tables should be explicitly stated in the Results section on page 7. For example, the p values should be listed for the statistically significant factors of lymph node positivity and tumor grade. Tumor grade is not even referenced at all in the Results section except that it is contained in a table. Lymph node status is referenced, but still needs the p value for ease of author reading. Also any factors that were not statistically significant, but unexpected should also be contained in the Results section including p value. For example, Stage is explored as is tumor size and ER status in the Discussion. The data/p value for each of these should be reflected in the Results even if in just a single sentence.
- The authors initially concludes that their results are not influenced by their country's stage of development (page 8, lines 15-18), but then they state on page 9 in lines 23-26) that country stage of development may have influenced treatment and outcome. Perhaps this is how I am interpreting the statements, but further explanation for better clarity may be more reader friendly.
- I am confused as Table 1 on page 16 and Table 2 on page 17 seem to be contradictory. In Table 1, there were 64 of 69 patients noted to have distant metastasis. However, Table 2 lists that 91.4 percent (n=64) of patients were M0.

Minor Essential Revisions-

- page 9, line 8 should read "In regard to the tumor...."
Discretionary Revisions-
-Hormone status did not statistically affect survival. Do the authors believe this is due to the fact that Her2 was not captured and treated with directed therapy? In other words, was the difference in survival related to hormone status overshadowed by the lack of Her2 directed therapy?

-on page 8, line 14 concludes that the differences in survival in this study compared to the others quoted may be due to a higher stage at presentation of patients in this study. While this may be true in regard to overall survival, the author could more accurately compare "apples to apples". In other words, the author could compare survival for patients with a specific Stage in this study to the same Stage in the other cited studies. It is a big jump to make the statement that the survival is different overall simply because of the higher stage at presentation without a mention as to the composition of the patients in the other studies.

Overall, the article contributes to the scientific body and I recommend the paper for inclusion in your journal.

Tiffany Berry, MD

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 am a speaker for Lifecell Corporation and receive honoraria for speaking engagements, but I declare that I have no competing interests that influence my review of this article.