Reviewer's report

Title: Feasibility of intensity-modulated and image-guided radiotherapy for locally advanced esophageal cancer

Version: 2 Date: 23 July 2013

Reviewer: Ronald Chen

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Major Compulsory Revisions:

This is a small retrospective study of 10 esophageal patients treated to a high dose of IMRT/IGRT. Overall, while I find this general topic to be of interest, this study is quite limited in terms of the small number of patients (a problem exacerbated by patient heterogeneity), relatively short follow-up, and no comparison arm. While the authors do acknowledge these limitations, they are quite major and not likely fixable. This manuscript may have some utility as a “case report,” but perhaps not as a full research manuscript.

Minor Essential Revisions:

1) Please define IGRT. How is “image guidance” used in these patients? The one patient who did not receive IGRT – does that mean this patient was not treated with Tomotherapy? For readers of this journal who are not radiation oncologists, these treatments and terms should be described a little more.
2) Please also define “locally advanced” as used in this study.
3) Please define the timing difference between “short-term” and “long-term” toxicity
4) The authors indicate that the doses used in this study were “curative” radiation doses for esophageal cancer, which implies that prior publications (including clinical trials) which used lower radiation doses were not curative. Given a lack of evidence suggesting that high radiation doses result in better outcomes for this disease, I do not believe the author’s implications are accurate.

Level of interest: An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

No competing interest at all