Author's response to reviews

Title: Somatostatin receptor expression in Merkel cell carcinoma as target for molecular imaging

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RE: Manuscript 1953419757112834

Dear Editors,

We thank you very much for your efficient and timely handling of our manuscript (No. 1953-4197-5711-2834) entitled “Somatostatin receptor expression in Merkel cell carcinoma as target for molecular imaging”.

We are pleased that the manuscript is close to acceptance and would like to address the remaining comments of the editor.

Editor’s Comments:

(1) Please could you clarify whether you received approval from a specific ethics committee or institutional review board for your study. Please can you state whether your research conformed to the Helsinki Declaration, and to local legislation. Please add a paragraph in your methods section stating this.

In our retrospective study, imaging studies of consecutive patients with MCC examined between 05/2008 and 09/2011 were analyzed. SSTR-PET was performed in the clinical routine and the imaging test was offered to patients on the basis of compassionate use; informed consent for the imaging procedures was obtained. Consequently, no additional approval by the local ethics committee was needed following established local practice. As this is not a prospective clinical trial, the Declaration of Helsinki does also not apply. Instead,
the German Medicines Law (AMG) and the German Radiation Protection Ordinance (StrSchV) apply. Imaging studies were performed in accordance to these standards. Our cohort includes a retrospective analysis of single institutional data; co-authors with other affiliations have been part of our institution at time of analysis. We added a paragraph in the methods section (marked in yellow, page 5, lines 12-18).

(2) Please also indicate whether patients gave informed consent for the publication of the pictures used in this study. Please provide a statement in your methods if consent has been obtained, otherwise please remove the photos of patients you have included in your manuscript.

Patient’s consent or the patient’s next of kin consent was obtained for publication of illustrations including photos. We added a paragraph in the methods section (marked in yellow, page 5, lines 19-20).

We hope that the revised manuscript is now acceptable for publication in BMC Cancer. All authors have read and approved the revised manuscript. This manuscript is not under consideration elsewhere.

On behalf of all co-authors, C. Lapa, A. Schirbel, K. Herrmann, M.C. Kreissl, A. Schnack, E.-B. Bröcker, M. Goebeler, A.K. Buck, and J.C. Becker.

Yours sincerely,

Kristina Buder, MD