Reviewer's report

Title: Transarterial infusion chemotherapy with cisplatin plus S-1 for hepatocellular carcinoma treatment: A phase I trial

Version: 4 Date: 27 December 2013

Reviewer: Carl Schmidt

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? YES
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? YES
3. Are the data sound? YES
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? YES
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? YES
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? Not mentioned
7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? YES
8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? YES
9. Is the writing acceptable? YES

Summary Recommendation -

This is a phase I study of patients in Japan with unresectable HCC evaluating the combination of S1 with cisplatin hepatic arterial infusion. The paper is well written, the methods are clear and the conclusions appropriate. See below suggestions for a revised manuscript.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. More detail is needed about the specifics of CDDP-TAI infusion in the Methods. Was this delivered to the whole liver or was this a lobar or selective approach based on tumor number and location? Did all patients receive CDDP-TAI only once?

2. The Methods section second sentence under Patient Eligibility is unclear - it seems that patients were eligible only if transplant, TACE or ablation were not options. Most patients in the study had received prior TACE - what were the reasons these patients were not eligible for further TACE treatments - progression of disease? What drugs were used for the prior TACE procedures?

Minor Essential Revisions

1. The first sentence in the Methods section under Patient Eligibility does not make sense and needs correction.
Discretionary Revisions
None

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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'