Reviewer's report

Title: Differences in clinical features and outcomes between patients with thymoma and those with thymic carcinoma

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Reviewer: Shamus Carr

Reviewer's report:

Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)

In section 3.3.1, the authors may want to consider utilizing the standard rules for significant figures when reporting data.

The last two sentences of the second paragraph of the discussion may be combined into a single sentence that would be stronger.

The writing could use a closer review and editing prior to publication in an English language journal. Example: Recent biomarker investigations explored c-KIT is a characteristic of thymic carcinoma [19]. For this sentence, investigations are a characteristic. Therefore, the sentence should be: Recent biomarker investigations explored c-KIT are a characteristic of thymic carcinoma [19]. There are other instances when words are made plural that should not be

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

On the title page the word “adviaced” is used. This is not a word. Did the authors mean “advised”?

The term “immunological complications” seems out of place. A more accepted term might be “immunological abnormalities” as not all patients with aplastic anemia or myasthenia have complications, but they are all certainly abnormal.

In the Discussion, the sentence immediately after references 14-16 needs to be re-written. (i.e.: “It seems us to be associated…”)

In the next to last paragraph of the Discussion, Dr. Weksler’s name is misspelled. There is no “s” on it. Additionally, please edit the following sentence as the grammar is poor.

Table 1 needs to be re-formatted. There appears to be a line that is skipped making the data for histology not line up. Also, some of the categories run over 2
lines with broken words (ie: complications).

Same issue for Table 3 on the format.

All Tables need to be reviewed and re-formatted to include, but not limited to, title, type, font, alignment, wrap-around, etc...

In the Figure legends section, please re-align. In the pdf reviewed here, there is a free floating 5 that needs to have the portion of the sentence that follows moved to it.

Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

In section 3.1, the authors describe what appears to be the histologic subtypes of the thymic carcinomas. The authors state there were 68 thymic carcinomas, but in this section there are only 65 listed (42 squamous, 10 neuroendocrine (not 12 like the abstract states), 8 unknown/other, 4 mucoepidermoid, and 1 lymphepithelioma-like). Can the authors help me understand the missing 3 carcinomas and further explain the “12 neuroendocrine” in the abstract. Then in Table 1, the authors report having 46 squamous cell carcinomas. Also, the authors list only 11 NE tumors in this table.

In section 3.3.2, the 10-year survival for thymic carcinoma is reported as 6.2%, while in the rest of the paper it is 2.3%.

The sentence in the Discussion that was referenced earlier to be re-written is unclear. What seems to be associated? The authors state “it”. If this refers to the preceeding sentence, then it may mean limitaions. Please clarify.

In the paragraph in the Discussion that begins: Large-scale databases, the second sentence is unclear. Are the authors implying that large databases like the ITMIG only take surgical cases? This is not the case. Also, in the third sentence there is an example of not making a word plural that should be plural (“These databases”)

In the final sentence of the same paragraph, the authors seem to imply that databases like the ITMIG may be biased due to limited data and reliability of diagnosis and treatment. In my opinion, it is not exactly that way as the ITMIG database will be likely much larger than any single institutional database. However, as any database is limited by the quality of the data placed into it and if considered unreliable, it is a function of the data that is submitted to it for inclusion.

In Table 1, there are only 14 patients listed under “Complications”. Yet, the abstract says that there were 26, with all in the thymoma group. Also, the Table shows 1 in the thymic carcinoma group. The entire Table 1 needs to carefully reviewed for accuracy.

Table 1 and 2 report different data. Example: NE tumors – 11 in Table 1 and 12
in Table 2.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**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.