Reviewer's report

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

**Version:** 3

**Date:** 18 March 2014

**Reviewer:** Daniela Molena

**Reviewer's report:**

Major Compulsory revisions

This original manuscript titled “Differences in clinical features and outcomes between patients with thymoma and those with thymic carcinoma”, by Okuma et al., report the results of a retrospective review of a Single Institution experience with thymoma and thymic carcinoma.

The study is a retrospective review of 187 patients treated over a 30-year period. The authors described the survival based on stage and WHO classification and concluded that thymomas and thymic carcinomas are different diseases and should be investigated separately.

The manuscript is interesting. Outlined are some questions and concerns:

1. The aim of this manuscript is not very well stated
2. The title of the manuscript is not supported by the development of the manuscript. Which clinical features did the authors look at? Which outcomes besides survival?
3. In the paragraph titled “Prognostic factors affecting survival by uni- and multivariate analysis”, it not clear what the authors’ question is and what their statement mean. There are too many variables and only few deaths (especially in the thymoma group). Review from a statistician would be helpful.
4. The discussion is fragmented and it is difficult to understand the intent of the authors. What is the purpose of their study? How are their data comparing to the literature? What is this study showing that is new comparing to the previously reported studies? What are the limitations? I am not even sure the conclusions are relevant. The authors’ conclusions in the abstract are different than the conclusions in the manuscript.

In summary the study is a retrospective review of a single institution experience with treatment of thymic malignancies over a long period of time. The manuscript is interesting but does not bring new information to the literature. The number of patients per class is very low. A descriptive analysis of their experience might be more appropriate without trying to look at prognostic factors. A comparative analysis between thymoma and carcinoma should be more clearly planned and outlined.
Minor Essential Revisions

1. The authors state in the abstract that “The overall 5- and 10-year survival rates were 85.4% and 33.8%, respectively, for thymoma and 71.5% and 2.3%, respectively, for thymic carcinoma”. In the paper however they state that for thymoma “The 5-year and 10-year survival rates were 85.4% and 71.5%”, however for carcinoma “The 5-year and 10-year survival rates were 33.8% and 2.3%, respectively”. The statement in the body of the paper seems more aligned with previously reported survival rates and I think there is a mistake in the abstract. Can the authors comment and correct?

2. Can the authors give some information about which patients underwent curative versus palliative treatment? I assume patients with more advanced disease underwent palliative treatment, is this correct?

3. How many patients are lost at follow up?

4. There are several misspelled words and the English is not fluent. I recommend the manuscript be reviewed by an English speaking person.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no disclosures