Reviewer’s report

Title: Vascular effects, efficacy and safety of nintedanib in patients with advanced, refractory colorectal cancer: a prospective phase I subanalysis

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Reviewer: Ullrich Graeven

Reviewer’s report:

The authors report a preplanned subgroup analysis of 30 patients with colorectal cancer (CRC) originally included in a nintedanib phase I trial. The phase I trial was an open-label, single and multiple dose study, with accelerated, toxicity-guided dose escalation.

Besides classical phase I parameter like toxicity and tumor response the authors used dynamic contrast-enhanced magnetic resonance imaging (DCE-MRI), as a non-invasive imaging technique to monitor changes in tumour haemodynamics.

The results show no difference in the toxicity spectrum for the CRC patients as compared to the whole study population.

According to the DCE-MRI results there was a positive correlation between tumor blood flow and a non progressive tumor status.

The study confirms the data of the original study that nintedanib has an effect on tumor blood flow and indicates a potential clinical effect in patients with advanced CRC warranting further clinical evaluation of nintedanib in patients with CRC.

Major Compulsory Revisions: none

Minor Essential Revisions:

1. The authors should give information on the number of lines of palliative chemotherapy that the patients received prior to the study

2. What are the reasons that 9 of the 30 pts were not evaluable for DCE-MRI ?

3. In table 1 the authors indicate that the range of metastatic sites was 0 to 5 indicating that patients without metastatic disease were included in the study. How many patients did not have a metastatic disease ?

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:

competing interests:

Honoraria and Advisory Board: Roche