Reviewer's report

Title: Irreversible Electroporation of Unresectable Soft Tissue Tumors with Vascular Invasion: Effective Palliation

Version: 2 Date: 14 March 2014

Reviewer: T Peter Kingham

Reviewer’s report:

major compulsory revisions

1. The conclusion in the abstract that local disease control and long local RFS demonstrate the superiority to other therapeutic options is not supported by the data. These are patients with different cancers in different anatomic locations with different therapeutic histories. It is difficult to conclude anything beyond the complication and actual local recurrence rates.

2. All of the complications should have an organ specific denominator. For example, for pancreas leaks, the denominator should be the number of patients with IRE performed in the pancreas. It’s not clear what the denominator is currently.

3. In the results section, the local recurrence free survival with all cancers combined is difficult to interpret. This goes back to comment #1 – with a heterogeneous population of cancers it is difficult to make conclusions. The factors associated with recurrence are all different for different cancers. The discussion should be condensed and restructured removing most commentary about disease specific survival and local recurrence unless it is broken down by different diseases.

minor essential revisions

4. In the methods section vascular invasion is defined as a tumor less than 5mm from a major vascular structure. What is a major vascular structure? Perivascular may be a more accurate term, as vascular invasion does not represent what actually is occurring in many of these situations.

5. Technical success is described in the methods. Later in the methods ablation success is described. What is the difference between these two?

6. The tables were not visible to me.

7. What were the causes of perioperative death?

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.