Reviewer’s report

Title: A rare case of watery diarrhea, hypokalemia and achlorhydria syndrome caused by pheochromocytoma

Version: 3 Date: 28 April 2014

Reviewer: Giovanni Conzo

Reviewer’s report:

The authors report a very rare case of adrenal pheochromocytoma (phee) secreting vasointestinal peptide (VIP) mimicking a vipoma (neuroendocrine tumor) originating from another anatomical site (pancreas…), causing diarrhea and masking hyperthension. Moreover they analyse the “in vivo” effects of VIP on bone turn over. The paper was very interesting, it was well conducted and well written and, according to literature data, the case report was very rare because only about ten cases have been previously reported. VIP secretion by a typical phee (about 25% of pheos are normotensive) associated with unusual clinical course (watery diarrhea, hypokalemia…) are the main interesting and original aspects of this paper. In my personal experience my team observed a phee secreting calcitonin (demonstrated by immunopathological studies) in a MEN 2A female young patient (Conzo G., Circelli L., Pasquali D., Sinisi A., Sabatino L., Accardo G., Renzullo A., Santini L., Salvatore F., Colantuoni V. Lessons to be learned from the clinical management of a MEN 2A patient bearing a novel 634/640/700 triple mutation of the RET proto-oncogene. Clin Endocrinol (Oxf). 2012 Dec; 77 (6):934-6) confirming the possible eterogeneous hormonal secretion by neuroendocrine tumors like phee.

Also, literature review was very accurate. The paper may be considered of relevant interest, references are appropriate, relevant and updated and I suggest to add the citation above indicated. Moreover the paper should be revised by a native speaker. Therefore I consider the paper suitable for being published in BMC Cancer after minor revisions.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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

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