Reviewer's report

Title: Immunohistochemical analysis of cancer stem cell markers in locally advanced pancreatic adenocarcinoma patients after neoadjuvant chemoradiotherapy

Version: 2 Date: 16 June 2014

Reviewer: Deepa Patil

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The manuscript titled "Immunohistochemical analysis of cancer stem cell markers in locally advanced pancreatic adenocarcinoma patients after neoadjuvant chemotherapy" is a study that evaluates expression of stem cell markers to explore their role as prognostic markers in a neoadjuvant setting. This study is novel in that it shows that CD133 and ALDH1 can provide additional information for patients with locally advanced pancreatic cancers who have already received neoadjuvant therapy.

The authors need to address the following aspects of the study:

Major revisions:

1. Most of the stem cell markers are expressed by acinar cells. Is there any information about how this relates to ductal adenocarcinoma, which arises from ductal epithelial cells? Perhaps the authors could explain this in the discussion.

2. How was the response to neoadjuvant therapy graded? What was the percentage of residual cancer in each of these cases/groups?

3. Please explain Evan’s criteria in the methods section in Table 2.

4. Discussion: EpCAM, CD24, CD44, and CXCR4 results are different from published literature. The discussion should include the reasons why their data is different from literature. Is it related to the antibodies or number of cases?

Discretionary revisions:

5. Was there any staining observed in pancreatic intraepithelial neoplasia? If so, was there any change in the percentage or intensity of staining with any of the markers?

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.