Reviewer’s report

Title: Lymph node enlargement after definitive chemoradiotherapy for clinical stage I esophageal squamous cell carcinoma

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Reviewer: Yuji Tachimori

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This paper reported the clinical characteristics of lymph node enlargement after CRT. The aim of this study was quite unique and attractive.

However, there are several points to be addressed.

1. The enlarged lymph nodes were diagnosed as a recurrence when they increased in size and number in the CT scan. The authors don’t include information from a currently used staging evaluation, PET, in their analysis. I suggest that this is an important deficiency.

2. To elucidate the usefulness of CRT for patients with clinical stage I esophageal cancer won’t be the aim of this study.

3. The planning target volume was limited to the primary tumor without prophylactic lymph node coverage. Metachronous recurrence out of the radiation field was not included in the present study. So, all the enlarged lymph nodes diagnosed as a recurrence were located in the radiation field limited within 2- to 3-cm margins above and below the tumor. However, in Table 3, LN locations spread from supraclavicular to cardia. Were all those nodes included in the radiation field?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.