Reviewer's report

Title: Racial Differences in Mantle Cell Lymphoma in the United States

Version: 2 Date: 28 July 2014

Reviewer: Lou Gonsalves

Reviewer's report:

This paper addresses an important topic. Mantle Cell Lymphoma (MCL) is a rare cancer with poor outcomes. Little is known about racial and ethnic disparities in presentation, treatment, and prognosis. This manuscript makes some headway in elucidating racial and ethnic differences. However, I feel that some important changes are required before this article can be published.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. The treatment analyses should be omitted or the authors should undertake additional analyses utilizing SEER-Medicare linked data rather than SEER data alone in order to examine treatment of MCL. As the authors state, SEER data alone does not include chemotherapy which is the primary therapy for MCL. Presenting data for surgery and radiation therapy only is not hugely informative for the majority of MCL patients: the numbers of patients likely treated by surgery/radiation therapy alone will be small and hence any racial/ethnic differences are unlikely to be statistically significant. Otherwise, authors should provide justification for retaining the treatment data as they currently stand.

2. Tables 2 and 4 should include counts as well as rates (for table 4, the number N in the SEER*Stat results table for each cell). It is important to be aware of the small numbers on which some of the estimates are based.

Minor Essential Revisions:

1. Remove the words “…and phenotypes…” from line 87. Does not make sense here.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.