Reviewer's report

Title: Circulating tumor cells and survival of patients with gastric cancer: a meta-analysis

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Reviewer: Nuh N Rahbari

Reviewer's report:

The authors performed a systematic review and meta-analysis on the prognostic role of CTC detection in patients with gastric cancer.

The topic is of current interest for both scientists and clinicians. The methodology is mostly adequate.

I have the following comments:

1. The authors should perform a quality assessment of all included studies. It is correct that there is no universal agreement as to which tool should be used for observational studies. However, this does not justify the fact not to do a quality assessment at all.

2. There are already several meta-analyses published on the same topic. The authors should clearly point out the novelty of their study.


3. The authors need to clearly define their inclusion criteria for the studies to be included in the present meta-analysis.

4. It is not clear, why the authors included studies that investigated the role of miRNAs as biomarkers, as these do not represent circulating tumor cells or specific tumor cell (epithelial) markers.

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 do not have any competing interests.