Reviewer's report

Title: Multicenter Phase II Study of Apatinib in Non-triple-negative Metastatic Breast Cancer

Version: 2  Date: 22 December 2013

Reviewer: Claus Hanusch

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions:
1. in the Abstract part: please be consistent in using term CBR and DCR... DCR is not explained as disease control rate;

2. Results: "... company`s new policy..": what does this mean? what was the original planned sample size? any recruitment problems, concerns?

3. Statistical Analysis: how is the statistical power affected by the earlier recruitment stop?

4. Patients Characteristics: you stated: "...23 (33,9%) patients were heavily pretreated..."- 23 patients would not be 33,9 %? is this really correct? Table 1: hormonreceptorstatus: 6 unknown: any reason why?

5. Efficacy: you stated: "...1 was trastuzumab pretreated..."- according to the inclusion criteria every Her2 positiv patient at least should have received 1 prior line of anti-her2 treatment... can you specify on that?

6. Discussion: please clarify on your statement: 2 of 6 her2 pos. patients and in the Efficacy Chapter you stated 2 of 9 her2 pos. patients; you mentioned once again that 1 patient had recieved her2 targeted therapy- could you make this point more clear, why you find that worth mentioned?

7. Conclusions: "...and it might be better to be tested in breast cancer with high angiogenesis dependency." - could you make a short comment on which cancer subtyp or patient population you would like to see the compound to be tested in the future

Minor Compulsory Revisions:
1. Patients and Methods: Patients: "... had prior therapy with prior treatment with a..." better: "... had prior treatment with a...

To summarize: the investigators seem to have a great experience with this compound in several earlier trials, therefore this article is based on best knowledge using this compound and the data seems to be conclusive.

Please let a statistician check the results after provided with details about original planned subject size.
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests: no competing interests