Reviewer's report

Title: Primary effect of chemotherapy on the transcription profile of AIDS-related Kaposi's sarcoma

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Reviewer: Dr Donald Northfelt

Level of interest: A paper whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Advice on publication: Accept after discretionary revisions

1) I think it is incorrect to state that the combination of doxorubicin, bleomycin, and vincristine is the most commonly used chemotherapeutic regimen for AIDS-KS. Even in 1997, liposomal anthracyclines (liposomal doxorubicin or daunorubicin) were by far the most commonly used therapies for AIDS-KS, and paclitaxel was probably the second most commonly used therapy.

2) The authors should state their conclusions in a much more conservative fashion. They state in very broad terms (paraphrasing) that "chemotherapy causes changes in gene expression" but I believe that they should generalize their conclusions only to AIDS-KS based on examination of this one patient's tissues. I do not object to additional speculation about the possible generalizability of these observations, but in their language they should be much more careful to qualify their discussion as speculation (e.g., use of words such as "possible," "perhaps," "plausible," or even "likely." When they make overly definitive statements based on minimal observations, they threaten to undermine their premise by engendering reader skepticism.

Competing interests:

None declared.