Reviewer's report

Title: Nerve tolerance to high-dose-rate brachytherapy in patients with soft tissue sarcoma: a retrospective study

Version: 1 Date: 30 April 2005

Reviewer: Jiri petera

Reviewer's report:

General: The topic of the article "Nerve tolerance to high-dose-rate brachytherapy in patients with soft tissue sarcoma: a retrospective study" (Tadahiko Kubo) is actual and important

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached):

1. What was a reason to administer brachytherapy to a patient with a low-grade lesion with negative margin?
2. In the abstract the authors write, that five patients had a surgical margin positive and two negative. On the page 5: "The patological examination of surgical specimens demonstrated, that there were no gross residual lesions and one microscopic positive margin." That correlates with table 2. Could be the margin involvement status explained more clearly?
3. Page 9: "According to prospective randomized trials, this modality was most beneficial for histological high-grade STS of the extremity with a positive microscopic surgical margin (11,12)" The cited studies does not support such a conclusion.
4. Page 9: .. since a number of recent reports described satisfactory local control with a decrease in the probability of complications in patients with STS."
The number of reports dealing with HDR brachytherapy in soft tissue sarcomas is very limited.
5. Brachytherapy should be described more in detail, particularly regarding ICRU 58 recommendations. The doses to nerves should be explained.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests