Author's response to reviews

Title: Phase I Dose-Escalating Study of Docetaxel in Combination with 5-Day Continuous Infusion of 5-Fluorouracil in Patients with Advanced Gastric Cancer

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Dear Editor

BMC CANCER

Title: Phase I Dose-Escalating Study of Docetaxel in Combination with 5-Day Continuous Infusion of 5-Fluorouracil in Patients with Advanced Gastric Cancer

Please find attached revised manuscript and revision details. We really thank for the thoughtful review on our manuscript. The comments have been so valuable in completing our manuscript. We revised our manuscript according to your suggestions. We wish that this revised version would be reviewed again. Our reply to your comments is listed on the next page. Thank you for your consideration of this manuscript.

Sincerely yours,

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Reviewer Peter C Thuss-Patience’s comments & revision:

I really appreciate for your thorough and thoughtful review.
As a matter of fact, we had planned a phase II trial combining docetaxel and 5-FU according to the previously published phase I data. However, we experienced unacceptable toxicity (grade 3-5 stomatitis, febrile neutropenia and even a mortality) in the first five patients and then re-designed this phase I trial. The story was in part outspoken in Background section (page 6).

1. At page 8 (treatment plan) it should be clearly stated whether only the first cycle is evaluated to determine DLT.
   - We added sentences as you recommended (page 9).

2. The authors have to discuss their policy of using hematological growth factors.
   - As we previously experienced febrile neutropenia in patients treated with docetaxel-FU combination, we thought that it was mandatory to administer G-CSF for patients who had one episode of febrile neutropenia or infection in subsequent cycles. We edited a sentence as you recommended (page 9).

3. Important publications have to be included in the discussion (Hawkins et al).
   - We cited the abstract from Hawkins in the discussion section (page 14).

4. The authors stated that “the addition of 5-FU to docetaxel increases the hematologic toxicity”. It is not clear how this statement can be retrieved from the current study.
   - We agree with your comment and removed the statement.

5. It is stated that febrile neutropenia remains the main DLT of this regimen. This should be clarified.
   - We agree with your comment and removed the statement.

6. The DCF regimen reported by Ajani is not discussed correctly… The judgement that the Ajani DCF regimen will never be a standard is a
personal point of view of the authors which is not shared by the scientific community.

- We totally agree with you and admit our misunderstanding. We corrected the mistakes and edited some sentences (page. 14~15)

7. At table 2 footnote 2 does not give any additional information.
- We removed footnote 2.

8. Eliminate brand name Taxotere.
- We edited as you recommended.

9. Page 6: Include citation when describing “most previous studies…”
- We added citations as you commented.

10. Table 1: change “recurrent” in “locally advanced”
Reviewer Li-Tzong Chen’s comments & revision:

1. The authors did not clearly define MTD throughout the manuscript.
   - Thanks for your thoughtful comment. We corrected some possible confusion in defining MTD and recommended phase II dosage, as you suggested.

2. Data listed in Table 2 are confusion.
   - We reviewed the Table 2 contents and it required some corrections.
     On dose level 2 (the recommended dose level), four more patients were treated but not included in determination of MTD.
   - We removed Table 2 footnote 2, to avoid confusion.