Reviewer's report

Title: Incidence of metastatic disease after pre- and postoperative radiation therapy in primary high grade and large soft tissue sarcomas

Version: 1 Date: 16 February 2006

Reviewer: Claus Belka

Reviewer's report:

General
The analysis of metastasis rate in patients with high grade sarcoma in dependence of the primary treatment sequence is generally interesting.

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

The most severe problem I have with this paper is the fact that within the setting of already published randomized trial a completely different picture emerged. Although the authors discuss this fact I can not accept their conclusion that "The advantage of preoperative radiation therapy is lesser toxicity and probably a better patient function. Our data indicates that the elapsed time to tumour resection after preoperative radiation might play a role for the development of metastasis. This deteriorates our results in the preoperative study group. When preoperative radiation has to be used, a combination of RTX and offensive chemotherapy with modern treatment protocols shows advantageous results."

The data basis used is not of adequate quality to support this interpretation. The authors clearly have to overwork their interpretations before a decision regarding a publication can be reached.

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

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