Reviewer's report

Title: Clinical management of women with metastatic breast cancer: a descriptive study according to age group.

Version: 3 Date: 9 June 2006

Reviewer: Elmer Villanueva

Reviewer's report:

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a statistical review of the manuscript. The version forwarded to me followed the May 14, 2006 review of Dr Manoj Pandey. I note that the article has undergone substantial review of its clinical content. I am pleased to report that there are only minor statistical issues requiring attention.

On the whole, the statistical procedures used by the Authors are appropriate as is their reporting of the results. The following revisions are required:

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
1. The Authors should specify the level of significance used.
2. The Authors should recognise that the small sample size and number of inferences drawn from the data raise the strong likelihood of the multiple comparisons problem. There is no easy way around this, I'm afraid. However, the Authors will do well to acknowledge this in the Discussion section as a limitation of the study. In addition, the Authors should soften their language when speaking of "significant" differences among groups.
3. It is usual to discuss the methodologic shortcomings of the study in the Discussion section. The Authors will need to do this. In addition to the issue of multiple comparisons raised in (2), the Authors may discuss ascertainment bias, the relationship of their study population to the total population, etc.
4. It is unnecessary to specify the statistical test used to arrive at the p-value in tables.

I trust the Authors to carry out these changes themselves.

Thanks

Elmer

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests