Reviewer's report

Title: Prognostic significance of composite expressions of MCM2, Ki-67 and gelsolin in non-small cell lung cancer

Version: 2 Date: 3 May 2006

Reviewer: Anne-Pascale Meert

Reviewer's report:

General
Yang et al submitted a study about the prognostic significance of MCM2, Ki-67 and gelsolin in NSCLC. This is a well designed, described and written study. However, some points have to be elucidated.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on 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)

1) The cut-off chosen for Ki-67 and MCM2 seems to be arbitrarily based on the literature results (25%). Moreover, authors mention that it is based on examination of their staining data. Unfortunately, there is no information about the median of the cells stained for these 2 markers, median that could be a good cut-off for defining high and low level of the markers.
2) There exist major discordances between the text describing phenotypic expression on page 11 and the explanation given on figure 1.
3) The rate of tumours exhibiting high MCM2 expression is 47% in the text (page 11) but 61% in the table 1. This must be revised.
4) The origin of MIB1 antibody is not clear. On page 8, it is mentioned 2 origins: Immunotech and DAKO.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1) The number of patients excluded due to a lack of adequate specimen for immunostaining and the number of patients excluded due to death not related to lung cancer should be specified for each of these 2 categories
2) The difference in term of MCM2 expression according to histology is probably biased by the small number of large cell carcinoma and other histologies in comparison with adenocarcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma

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: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

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