Reviewer’s report

Title: Four cycles of paclitaxel and carboplatin as adjuvant treatment in early stage ovarian cancer: the experience of the Hellenic Cooperative Oncology Group.

Version: 1 Date: 3 July 2006

Reviewer: Barbara C Vanderhyden

Reviewer's report:

General
The authors have performed a retrospective analysis of the toxicity and efficacy of combination paclitaxel and carboplatin as adjuvant chemotherapy in patients with stages I to IIb ovarian cancer. The merits of platinum-based adjuvant treatment in early stage ovarian cancer have been better studied in prospective, randomized trials; however there appears to be no published data on the efficacy or tolerability of this particular combination of drugs as adjuvant chemotherapy in early stage ovarian cancer. The study is substantially weakened by the fact that it is a retrospective, non-randomized study, and that patients were sub-optimally staged, and the data must be considered in that context. The most notable outcomes from this study are the toxicity data associated with combination adjuvant chemotherapy in early stage ovarian cancer patients, the survival rates achieved with 4 cycles of chemotherapy, and the indication that patients with Ic/II and tumor grade 2/3 had worse prognosis.

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

1. The last sentence of the Results section of the abstract indicates patients with "significantly shorter 5-year RFS". This phrase does not make sense - it's either a significantly shorter RFS or significantly fewer patients with 5-year RFS. In this case, it appears that the sentence should be modified to indicate significantly fewer patients with 5-year RFS.

2. The word "stage" is spelled incorrectly in the Precis.

3. Page 3, line 11: "was not supported by the results of phase II and II studies". Should this be Phase I and II?

4. Page 5, lines 4 and 7. "patients should have" is not clear. It must be stated clearly whether they did or did not adhere to these criteria.

5. Page 5, line 8 under Chemotherapy: ANC needs to be defined.

6. Page 6, line 1 under Statistical considerations: OS and RFS need to be defined.

7. Page 7: "...patients with available baseline CA125 had elevated levels." The "elevated level" is presumably above a cut-off value which should be stated.

8. Page 8: line 1, second paragraph under Progression-free and overall survival: PFS needs to be defined. Or presumably this should be RFS? This applies to frequent uses in this section as well as in Table 3.

9. Table 3: Grade is referred to here as I, II or III, but elsewhere as 1, 2 and 3.

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?: 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.