Reviewer’s report

Title: A randomized multi-center phase II trial of the angiogenesis inhibitor Cilengitide (EMD 121974) and gemcitabine compared with gemcitabine alone in advanced unresectable pancreatic cancer [ISRCTN13413322]

Version: 2 Date: 25 May 2006

Reviewer: Andrew Ko

Reviewer’s report:

General. The authors in general adequately address the concerns raised re: the original manuscript. The statistical design remains an inherent flaw of the study but the authors explain this and word it better in the manuscript. The manuscript overall reads better, although certain added paragraphs still read somewhat awkwardly, including:
1. The discussion of angiogenesis/pancreatic cancer in the Intro section. Also should include some references here.
2. The first paragraph on Biological Response in the Results section.
3. The last two sentences in the first paragraph of Efficacy (Discussion section). No need to discuss cetuximab; may want to invest a few more comments on bevacizumab (as a therapeutic agent with a putative antiangiogenic mechanism, as cilengitide is)

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached): none

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

The text on CA19-9 response in the Results section is confusing. I would simply add the data to Table 3 (Response Rate Data): % of patients with >50% decline in CA19-9 (can also include, if you want, % of responders with >50% decline; baseline CA19-9 concentration; duration of decline)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore): none

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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

Statistical review: Yes

Declaration of competing interests:

I have clinical research support from Eli Lilly (manufacturers of gemcitabine), and Genentech (manufacturers of bevacizumab [Avastin], another anti-angiogenesis agent).