Reviewer's report

**Title:** Use of Immunohistochemical Markers can Refine Prognosis in Triple Negative Breast Cancer

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 11 June 2007

**Reviewer:** Dan H Moore

**Reviewer's report:**

General
The manuscript address an interesting and important concern in breast cancer: prognosis for triple negative and basal subtypes. However, the evidence supporting their conclusion that prognostic factors differ at 3 yrs from those at 10 yrs is weak and possibly due to differences in patients who dropped out (were lost to follow-up) between 3 and 10 yrs rather than a difference in markers.

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

The following statistical issues need to be addressed:

1. It is not clear how adding a dummy variable for missing values was used in the Cox model. For example, if X is the marker value and IX is the indicator for X missingness, how are these used in the Cox model? If the model is
   \[ Y = A + B \times X + C \times IX \]
   what is the value for X when it is missing?

2. How were median survivals calculated? The survival curves shown in Figs 2 and 3 show survival well above 50% at 10 years. These curves are inconsistent with their reported median

**What next?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests