Reviewer's report

Title: Disease-specific survival for limited-stage small-cell lung cancer affected by statistical method of assessment

Version: 7 Date: 4 November 2006

Reviewer: Esa Läärä

Reviewer's report:

General

The manuscript is now clearly improved from the previous version. There is one major issue, to which I have implicitly but repeatedly paid attention when pointing out the fact that for some reason one of the models (Boag) contains an explicit cure fraction but the others do not. However, the solution and interpretation offered by the authors is not at all satisfactory.

The argument in page 7: "the proportion cured may be estimated, without a specific parameter, by the value of the survivor function at a time when few (or no) events are expected" lacks proper justification. The authors give no reference to support this overly simplistic method. Also, apart from the old paper of Boag (1949) the manuscript does not contain any references to the recent extensive literature on modelling and estimating cure fraction (or cure "rate") in survival analysis starting, say, from


A concise recent review of the alternative approaches is provided in


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

I would not require to start all the analyses to be based on including a cure fraction component in all the models compared. Nevertheless, the issue of the proportion cured must be discussed more carefully based on relevant references in the literature.

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?: Reject because too small an advance to publish

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes

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