Reviewer's report

Title: Intra-arterial carboplatin induction chemotherapy followed by surgery and/or radiotherapy for advanced head and neck cancer: single-center five-year results

Version: 1 Date: 31 January 2007

Reviewer: K. Thomas Robbins

Reviewer's report:

General

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

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

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

This is a prospective study of a cohort of patients treated in a unique fashion in which carboplatin was given as an intra-arterial infusion. Those patients who had a major response were then treated with radiation therapy only. Non-responders were treated with surgery.

The protocol introduces a novel algorithm for management of patients with advanced head and neck cancer. It is designed to triage patients who are sensitive to chemotherapy to a non-surgical regimen whereas those who are not sensitive are treated with surgery.

The manuscript is well written, and the results clearly described. The figures are illustrative of the data.

The authors should discuss whether radiation therapy alone versus chemoradiation should be used for those patients who are shown to be chemosensitive. Since 10 of the 36 patients who were treated with radiation only did not have a complete response, one would think that chemoradiation rather than radiation alone may have been a better alternative.

In the discussion, the authors should discuss the perceived advantages of IA carboplatin versus intravenous polychemotherapy as an induction regimen.

What next?: Accept after discretionary 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, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.