Reviewer’s report

Title: Adjuvant breast cancer chemotherapy during late-trimester pregnancy - evidence-based standard of care, or irrational fashion?

Version: 2 Date: 5 January 2007

Reviewer: Marco Colleoni

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)

The role of adjuvant chemotherapy in reducing the risk of recurrence and death is well established. Many retrospective data have shown that chemotherapy delay may be deleterious, specially in the presence of endocrine unresponsive disease, where the chemotherapy issue is crucial. So, by the mother point of view, the delay after 34 weeks cannot be acceptable. The role of early starting of chemotherapy should be discussed.

Some data with the use of adjuvant weekly epirubicin in peculiar situation (i.e elderly breast cancer patients) have shown a significant impact in terms of disease free survival. Moreover, the similar efficacy of weekly versus standard dose (every three weeks) of some cytotoxics is established. This should be discussed.

The issue of safety of chemotherapy administered during pregnancy, usually after the 16th week, has shown a good acute toxicity profile, although the long term toxicity cannot be excluded.

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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)

In the conclusion, the author has suggested that delaying chemotherapy to the postpartum period is an option especially for endocrine-responsive disease. In this subgroup, however, the question about the role of chemotherapy is still open also in cancer not raised during pregnancy.

The main issue to be addressed is about breast cancer with no expression of hormonal receptors, where the choice, timing and schedule of chemotherapy is crucial.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Reject because scientifically unsound

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare I have no competing interest