Reviewer's report

Title: Clinical Significance of Survivin Expression in Ductal Carcinoma in situ with Microinvasion of the Breast

Version: 1 Date: 20 February 2008

Reviewer: Rosemary Walker

Reviewer's report:

Major:
1. The study is of 52 (some data only covers 51) DCIS and 28 DCIS Mi from a period 1990 to 2005. This is a small number of cases for study and should be increased, particularly the Mi. were these consecutive cases and was the same fixation/processing protocol used throughout that time period.
2. Undertaking multivariate analysis on 28 cases is inappropriate due to the small numbers.
3. Figures - the quality is poor of some eg HER2 no membrane staining can be seen.
4. DCIS mi- 6 cases were neg for bcl2 and 4 for survivin, with numbers being similar for DCIS. It is difficult to assess the difference in significance for these 2 proteins and what the biological significance is.

Minor:
1. Introduction.
DCIS Mi can only be identified histologically.
Reference to ref 13 is incorrect - VNPI lacked discriminatory power for guiding management
nuclear grade refers to nuclear size and variation
2. Hypothesis
why should apoptosis and proliferation be associated with microinvasion?
3. Methods
These should be much shorter
Details about staining and antibodies need to be linked
Assessment of Her2 is incorrect - refers to partial or complete membrane staining
4. Discussion
This could be more concise
Since survivin is expressed in both DCIS and DCISmi it is difficult to determine how it could be used clinically; also what type of adjuvant therapy is being referred to in the conclusion.
5. Tables

These could be reduced

**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.