Reviewer’s report

Title: The reversal of recurrence hazard rate between ER positive and negative breast cancer patients with axillary lymph node dissection (pathological stage I-III) 3 years after surgery

Version: 3 Date: 10 October 2008

Reviewer: philippe chollet

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A-Suggestions:

1- Please connect the legends (absent) and figures (no numerotation)

2- In the abstract, in the conclusions: please replace « earlier » by « lesser » and « The » reversal of recurrence by « A » reversal of recurrence.

3- In Patients and Methods, in paragraph « Patients »: « 742 breast female…..were selected from the patients treated at Kyoto » instead of « 742 beast female…. Were admitted and treated at Kyoto »

« All the patients with breast conserving…. » instead of « All the patients with breast conserving… »

B-Remarks:

1- In Patients and Methods, in paragraph « Patients »: According to the authors, patients have been treated from 1980 to 2005. But as no special pathological review of the ER results was done, could you confirm that the immunohistochemistry method was used for the whole series of tumors ? We think that immunochemistry was very unusual in the eighties.

At the end of the « Patients » paragraph, page 5, could you summarize the radiotherapy and the medical treatment that the patients received instead of « The contents of treatments for breast cancer patients were previously described ». In effect, each paper must be considered as a whole for basic features, as TNM, chemotherapy and hormonotherapy may have effect on DFS and OS.

2- In paragraph « Estrogen receptor status », could you explain more precisely what shows figure 4 (OS or DFS) ? Moreover, in figure 4, the year 1990 is not mentioned. Could you correct it ?

3- In the figure legends, could you mention the p-value for figures 1, 2 and 4 ?

4- The results reported on figure 5 are very interesting. The authors must clarify whose is relative to receptor-effect survival gain versus hormone therapy survival gain.