Reviewer’s report

Title: Primary breast lymphoma: patient profile, outcome and prognostic factors. A multicentre Rare Cancer Network study

Version: 1 Date: 1 January 2008

Reviewer: Nicola Russell

Reviewer’s report:

This paper describes a review of the clinical characteristics and treatment modalities and results of a rare condition, namely primary breast lymphoma (PBL). It is therefore a useful addition to the medical literature, as a reference paper for colleagues treating a patient with PBL. The method used underlies the value of a Rare Cancer Network and given the restrictions imposed by this sort of multi-centre, retrospective study, there is a considerable body of data concerning this disease contained in the manuscript. I would not omit any of the tables or the Kaplan-Meier curve in figure 1. The statistical analyses seem appropriate for this type of data. The discussion section is fine, comparing other papers on the same disease with the current study. The authors a rightly cautious to draw conclusions that are too strong to be supported by a retrospective data-set. The negative effect of surgery on outcome underlines the need to have a cytological or histological diagnosis of breast tumours before deciding on a treatment plan. I suspect that several of the patients treated with mastectomy presented at a surgical clinic and were only referred to a radiation or medical oncologist post-operatively. The title and abstract require in my opinion no changes, and the English is good. My only suggestion would be to change the last sentence in the Discussion section, overall prognosis to: The 5-year survival reported in other series varied from 50-70% (refs) and is likely to be related to the DISTRIBUTION of prognostic factors IN THE DIFFERENT SERIES.

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