Author's response to reviews

Title: Prognostic scores in brain metastases from breast cancer

Authors:

Carsten Nieder (carsten.nieder@nlsn.no)
Kirsten Marienhagen (radiotherapy@gmx.net)
Sabrina T Astner (sabrina.astner@gmx.net)
Michael Molls (klinik-fuer-strahlentherapie@lrz.tu-muenchen.de)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Submission of the revised manuscript “Prognostic scores in brain metastases from breast cancer”

Dear Dr. Norton,

I would like to submit - on behalf of all authors - the revised version of the manuscript for review and, if suitable, publication in BMC Cancer. The reviewers’ thoughtful suggestions are greatly appreciated. Regarding their specific comments:

Martin Kocher
1. The motivation for the present analysis is now clearly stated in the introduction. Breast cancer is a biologically distinct, though heterogeneous, group and more and more systemic treatment options, which impact on survival, are nowadays available. Dr. Kepka’s comments on our manuscript clearly support this point of view.
2. We are not able to provide more data than the ones that are included in the revised version. Her2 status remains unknown in the majority of cases.
3. Treatment details have been provided in the expanded Table 1.
4. This point has been discussed in the expanded discussion section.

Romuald Le Scodan
1. More patient characteristics have been added in Table 1.
2. It is unfortunately not possible to provide more data. These parameters were never assessed in our patients. The sentence Dr. Le Scodan refers to has been modified.
3. Very few patients had imaging follow-up. The numbers are not sufficient to provide useful failure rate data.
4. 55 months is correct.

Minor essential revisions
1. The numbers have been added (Methods section).
2. Information provided (Methods section).
3. Reference included (Table 4). Abstracts are generally not included, only peer reviewed articles.
4. Information provided.
Lucyna Kepka
1. Both introduction and discussion have been expanded to address Dr. Kepka’s comments, e.g., on multiple comparisons and the size of the group.
2. Treatment details have been provided in Table 1. The methods section now includes information about the fact that the patients were treated in 2 institutions over many years.
3. The abstract has been modified, incl. number of patients and expanded conclusions.

Gustavo Viani
1. This information has been added to the introduction section.
2. This information is now shown in Table 1.
3. Also shown in Table 1 (or stated in the methods section, respectively).
4. Now shown in Table 1.
5. A new table has been added (Table 3).
6. Given the limited number of patients, we feel not comfortable evaluating sensitivity or specificity data. Even in the large databases (RTOG, Rades et al.) this has not been done. However, this point is important and has been added to the discussion.
7. The conclusion section has been modified according to these suggestions.

Sincerely,

Carsten Nieder, M.D.