Reviewer's report

Title: Prognostic scores in brain metastases from breast cancer

Version: 1 Date: 26 December 2008

Reviewer: Romuald Le Scodan

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1) The five prognostic scores are evaluated in an heterogenous group of patients (n=83) either treated with WBRT alone or with WBRT and radiosurgery or surgical resection. Patients caracteristics are not well described as well as the treatments parameters: KPS should be described further as < or ≥ 70 and age as < or ≥ 65. Treatments parameters should be described (% of patients receiving surgery or radiosurgery).

2) Only a minority of tumors characteristics such as hormone receptor status were available (35/83, 42%) and thus the validation of a score evaluating the prognostic value of specific parameters for breast carcinoma, such as the one described in the René Huguenin Cancer Center series, cannot be investigated. Please provide more informations regarding the tumors HR status and lymphopenia at the time of BM diagnosis.

I also suggest changing the line in the results "age, hormone receptor status and diameter..." to reflect that because of the small sample size this could not be investigated.

3) How many patients had at least one follow-up brain CT scan or MRI and can the authors investigate the failure rate.

4) GPA score: median survival of the first group: 55 months?

- Minor Essential Revisions

1) Please indicate the number of patients evaluable to validate the BSBM score and the score developped by Rades et al.

2) Please state in the manuscript whether KPS was actually documented numerically in each chart or whether a post-hoc analysis of KPS was determined by the authors as they reviewed the chart.

3) Table 3: Wronski et al. also reported that negative HR status was an independent prognostic factor for patients with BM from breast carcinoma treated with surgery with or without WBRT, with a median survival of 12.5 months for 20 patients with negative HR status, compared with 21.9 months for 22 patients with positive HR status (p < 0.05).

Estrogen receptor negative status was also an independent pejorative factor for 45 patients with BM from breast cancer treated at the University of California, San Francisco.


4) In the methods section, please state the statistical software package used for this analysis.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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