**Reviewer's report**

**Title:** Prognostic scores in brain metastases from breast cancer

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 13 January 2009

**Reviewer:** Martin Kocher

**Reviewer's report:**

**Major Compulsory Revisions**

1) There is only rare evidence that patients with brain metastases of breast cancer have a prognosis differing from that of other cancer types. In the well known RPA scoring system (Gaspar et al 1997, Int J Radiat Oncol Biol Phys 37, 745-751), breast cancer patients had a better prognosis, but tumor type didn’t turn out as a major factor. In two recently developed scores (Sperduto et al. 2008, Int J Radiat Oncol Biol Phys 70, 510-514; Rades et al. 2008, Strahlenther Onkol 184, 251-255), breast cancer patients did not survive longer than patients with other primaries in when using multivariate analysis. Such, the motivation to analyse seperately breast cancer patients has to be provided by the authors.

2) When deciding to only analyse breast cancer patients, the major determinants of therapy and prognosis (grading, HER2 status, hormone receptor status) should be available for the majority of the patients, which was not the case in the present analysis. Can they be provided ? It would be of much interest to have a scoring system that is specific for breast cancer patients with brain metastases and takes these factors into account.

3) The type of treatment for brain metastases (surgery +/- whole brain radiotherapy, radiosurgery) is a major factor for outcome, but no details were given in the analysis. Is it justified to analyse all these patients together without knowing the type of therapy for brain metastases ?

4) The number of analysed patients is quite small for testing severall scoring systems. It seems that the results are such quite arbitrary. Are they representative also for a larger group of breast cancer patients ?

**Minor Essential Revisions: None**

**Discretionary Revisions: None**

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.

Prof. M. Kocher