Reviewer's report

Title: Neoadjuvant Irinotecan (CPT-11), 5-Fluorouracil (5-FU) and Leucovorin (LV) for Colorectal Liver Metastases: A Means of Selecting Candidates for Resection

Version: 1 Date: 14 October 2008

Reviewer: Lorenzo L Capussotti

Reviewer's report:

The authors report a phase II trial of CPT-11 neoadjuvant chemotherapy for resectable colorectal liver metastases. The accrual time is too long (35 pts from 2001 to 2005) for a phase II study. Moreover, a phase III study comparing FOLFOXIRI vs FOLFIRI has been recently published on JCO (Falcone et al, JCO 2007; 25 (13)) reporting the RR and toxicity.

- Major Compulsory Revisions:
  1. The title should be changed since the authors can not demonstrate that CPT-11 based chemotherapy have utility in selecting pts to surgery and improving long-term outcome. This is not a randomized study.
  2. Seven pts had PD, two were resected. Which type of treatment got the other 5 pts? In particular, how many patients had 2nd line chemotherapy and which chemotherapy regimen?
  3. This study is not a randomized study; I do not think that there is really need to use the intention-to-treat analysis.
  4. Why did two pts stopped neoadj chemotherapy before their response was evaluated?
  5. The authors should specify the mean time from diagnosis to chemotherapy start; if it is long, overall survival should be calculated from the chemotherapy start and not form diagnosis time

The author must respond to these before a decision on publication can be reached. For example, additional necessary experiments or controls, statistical mistakes, errors in interpretation.

- Minor Essential Revisions
  1. In the “treatment pathway” section pts with PR are 13 and not 14
  2. Authors should report clearly the definition of DF survival
  3. It would be interesting to know the Body Mass Index and more data about steatosis grade (mild, moderate, severe) and steatohepatitis incidence

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.