Reviewer's report

Title: Response of the primary tumor in symptomatic and asymptomatic stage IV colorectal cancer to combined interventional endoscopy and palliative chemotherapy

Version: 1 Date: 19 October 2008

Reviewer: Jean-Pascal Machiels

Reviewer's report:

This study shows that in some palliative patients, it is possible not to remove the primary tumor and that the primary tumor can respond to modern chemotherapy.

Major compulsory revisions

Page 8 "in most of the patients... tumor related symptoms disapeared". It could be interesting to be more precise regarding the evolution of the baseline symptoms under therapy instead of just saying "Most".

Limitations of the study are the long period to enroll 20 patients (6 years) and the very limited number of patients. These two points should be acknowledged and discussed in the discussion section.

Minor essentials revisions

Page 6. I do not clearly understand the definition of PR: "defined as local relapse after therapeutic break"

Discussion could be improved and simplified: more emphasis on the role of curative surgery in case of resectable metastasis(es) is needed, particular on the topic regarding unresectable metastasis(es) that become resectable after chemotherapy. Discussion should be shortened, some data are repeated in the results and discussion as well as in the introduction and discussion.

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'