Reviewer's report

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

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Reviewer: Marwan Fakih

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Unfortunately, the authors fail to address the main issue with this manuscript which is objective tumor response assessment. The main weaknesses are:

1. Retrospective study without a clear methodology- Was there a protocol? Was it approved? What were the inclusion and inclusion criterira? How many patients were screened to determine the study group of 20 patients?

2. The most important issue is assessment of response. There is no clear rationale why some patients were debulked and why some were not. There is no objective assessment for response. It seems that we are to "assume" that patients needed further debulking even though they were asymptomatic. I am worried that too much dressing is done to make something out of an inadequately collected historic data. Without measurements of tumors confirming a response and without CLEAR documentations for need of debulking in patients with repeat debulking, it would be hard to draw any conclusions from this study. Frankly, it would be very unusual for patients with unresected primary to require ANY debulking at all and it has become standard practice that these patients get treated with systemic chemotherapy and without surgery and without routine endoscopy follow-up. The recommendations from this article are at odds with standard practice and are inadequately supported. To conclude that routine endoscopies need to be done in patients with unresected primaries subjects patients to unnecessary risky procedures. The safety of this practice is in question and cannot be confirmed through 20 patients.