Reviewer's report

**Title:** Early and very early hepatocellular carcinoma: when and how much do staging and choice of treatment really matter? A multi-center study.

**Version:** 2 **Date:** 14 December 2008

**Reviewer:** Sheng-Nan Lu

**Reviewer's report:**

I appreciate the author’s efforts. The questions have been well addressed. However, there were some space to be improved in tables and figures.

**General:**
1. All the abbreviations should be explained in each table and figure.
2. Please draw beautiful survival curves instead of “cut and paste” the draft figures from statistic software. Censored cases should be shown on the Kaplan-Meier curves. Pair-wide comparisons should be presented.

**Minor:**
Table 1. The footnote should be deleted.
Table 1 and 2 should be merged.
Tables 3 & 5 should be deleted. The information should be included in text and figures. When describe month, “90.000” is unnecessary. “90” is enough.
Table 4 & 6. Please try to made readers understand without complicated footnotes. The explanations should be in text.
Table 7. Try to express the data of validation set in the same way as study set.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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.