Reviewer's report

Title: Metastatic renal cell cancer treatments: An indirect comparison meta-analysis

Version: 2 Date: 24 September 2008

Reviewer: Ronald Bukowski

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript has been revised & is now resubmitted for review. The authors have addressed the majority of previous comments, and the current version is of significant interest. Several issues however remain.

1) Major
   a) The terms poor and high risk are utilized in the text to define patients with a poor outcome. This is confusing, and perhaps the accepted term, namely poor risk or prognosis would be helpful.
   b) Likewise the term low risk is also used, this I assume means favorable - again, use od previously accepted terms would be helpful to the reader.
   c) Reponse rates are provided in table 2, but the number provided is unclear. For example, for sunitinib the RR is listed as 4.64 or 3.86 - in the manuscript the RR was 39% or 46%. This needs to be clarified for all studies.
   d) The description of the temsirolimus study on p14 is inaccurate - pts were not previously treated, they were treatment naive and selected for poor risk status using the study criteria. The authors should address this.
   e) In the text, the study with BEV should be referred to as BEV + IFN. This was a combination, & not a single agent regimen. It may confuse the reader.
   f) It is suggested that sorafenib may be superior to BEV - is this based on the Yang and Escudier reports? In the untreated pt studies, the PFS for BEV + IFN was 10.2 and 8.5 mos, & for Sorafenib 5.6 vs 5.7 mos for IFN. These data do not appear to support this statement, can the authors provide clarification?

Minor:
   a) p10 : four studies permitted crossover after progression. Sunitinib & Sorafenib vs placebo after the interim analyses, Bev vs placebo (Yang) and Phase 2 of sorafenib vs IFN (in the study protocol). The statement on p10 is inaccurate.

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:

Honoraria and consulting fees from Pfizer, Wyeth, Bayer, Genentech, Novartis and Glaxo.