Reviewer’s report

Title: Bevacizumab plus FOLFIRI or FOLFOX as third and further line treatment in metastatic colorectal cancer patients: a retrospective study.

Version: 2 Date: 17 February 2009

Reviewer: Eduardo Diaz-Rubio

Reviewer’s report:

• Minor essential revisions
A few spelling mistakes were detected in the manuscript:
- Page 4, under the methods section: bolus of 400 mg/m2 of 5FU, 90 minutes or specify the abbreviation of it for min.
- Page 4, the web link to the CTC v 2.0 would rather be referenced in the bibliography section.
- Page 5, under the survival section in the results, CI instead of IC to refer the confidence interval.
- Table 1, there is a missing label in the WHO performance status label “n” (%) and also under the previous chemotherapy heading, “n” is missing.

• Discretionary revisions
I would like to suggest a few comments that from my point of view would complete the whole information that could be learnt from this series:
- It may be interesting to specify the exclusion criteria in the eligibility criteria section for this retrospective study to complete the information provided regarding the sample selection.
- It would be valuable to provide some data about the non-bevacizumab related toxicities that were found in these patients. Once the 3rd and beyond treatment lines in metastatic colorectal cancer progressive to the more active chemotherapy regimens have to be carefully balanced with the adverse events associated profile and are faced to best supportive care in the clinical practice, the reader would benefit from a better knowledge of the tolerance to the chemotherapy re-challenge combined with the antibody.
- Regarding the survival analysis, it might be interesting to discuss the implications of the opened confidence intervals that are presented in the PFS and OS stratified analysis by treatment response.
- In the discussion section, underlying the real subset of patients that could gain potential benefit from this treatment strategy and identifying the actual relevance of the group in the clinical practice would help to give an idea of the real weight of these findings in the clinical setting.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely
related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

No to all of the above