Reviewer’s report

Title: Phase II trial of daily low-dose nedaplatin and continuous 5-fluorouracil infusion combined with radiation for the treatment of esophageal squamous cell carcinoma

Version: 2 Date: 15 May 2009

Reviewer: K Jingu

Reviewer’s report:

The authors described a prospective study of radiotherapy concurrent with low-dose CDGP+5-FU for esophageal cancer. CDGP was a platinum anticancer drug which developed in Japan. The excellent data is important and interesting. However, I thought that the manuscript can be published after the authors perform the following:

Major Compulsory Revisions
1) In Methods, authors should show endpoint of this study. What is primary endpoint? Response rate? CR rate? Toxicity?
2) In Methods, although I saw ClinicalTrials.gov (NCT00197444), I do not know the additional chemotherapy was also prospective treatment initially? Authors said that patients who showed an objective response to the treatment was performed the additional chemotherapy, but when were the patients evaluated response? 1 or 2 months after chemoradiotherapy? Authors should show it in Methods.
3) In Methods, authors should describe radiation therapy in more detail. For example, the irradiated field, the direction of irradiation and energy of X-ray. And, in brachytherapy, authors should describe where was prescribed 4Gy per fraction and how often treat with brachytherapy? Once per week? Why were there variations in radiation therapy? Furthermore, authors show how many patients were performed in each total irradiation dose. It is difficult to evaluate the toxicities if not the irradiation method is kept uniform or similar, I think.
4) Because of above 2) and 3), I do not know that the prospective study is acceptable as phase II study. I guess authors had better change the title to “Prospective study of daily ~ ”.
5) In Results, Why were performed salvage surgery after recurrence? Was this protocol of this study? Please describe in Discussion about it. And what treatment was
performed after recurrence? Other chemotherapy? Re-irradiation?

6) In Results, is the acute toxicities included adverse effects in additional chemotherapy? If the endpoint in the present study was results of concurrent chemoradiation, authors have to except the toxicities, especially hematologic toxicities, from the results.

7) In Results (also in Discussion), authors described that the 5-year survival tended to be better for the adjuvant chemotherapy group (Figure 2B). But, because the significant value p was more than 0.1, authors cannot say better.

8) In Results, authors showed the initial response rate. And CR was showed in 20/33 patients, but 26/33 patients were performed additional chemotherapy. When is evaluated initial response?

Minor Essential Revisions

1) Some authors do not show their affiliations. Do those authors belong to First Department of Medicine?

2) Some regions were written in red. For example, “:” in results in abstract.

3) Conclusion in abstract was written “Conclusione”.

4) In methods, in eligibility criteria, authors wrote white blood cells>3*10^3 and platelets>1*10^5.

5) In methods, authors should show the name of statistical software.

6) At 5 lines on page 11, authors should add “,” before respectively.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to review this interesting report.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.