Reviewer's report

Title: Microvessel density as a new prognostic marker after radiotherapy in rectal cancer

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Reviewer: Arjan W Griffioen

Reviewer's report:

I do not think that this paper is advancing the field a lot. The patient numbers are small. When the group of 101 patients is divided in 3 groups (no RTX, short and Long RTX) and the latter one even in dead or alive patients, there is not much room for statistics anymore.

Measuring only MVD is not enough nowadays, and it even might be considered a weak parameter due to (inter and intra observer variations).

Also the paper does not seem to be put together very carefully:
1. why are the numbers of MVD in the abstract not the same as in the results section?
2. Figure 2 does not show anything about RTX.
3. Figure 3 does not show anything on dead or alive patients, as stated in results section.
4. Figure 6 is not called out at all.

CD31 would be a much better antigen for such studies, since it stains a lot more bloodvessels in tumor tissues.

The sentence 'the only feature....... as compared to latter' is not clear. It should be explained.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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