Reviewer’s report

Title: High Prevalence of Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) Reactivation in Rheumatoid Arthritis Patients Carrying HBV and the Use of Antiviral Prophylaxis: A Real-world Clinical Practice

Version: 2
Date: 3 October 2014

Reviewer: Antonella Fioravanti

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions: The paper should not be accepted for many reasons: the methodology is poor, the patients are scarcely characterized both from the hepatic point of view and for the rheumatoid arthritis. You should specify how many patients had chronic HBV infection and how many were only potential occult carriers, you should specify the HBV serological markers for each patient both at baseline and at the end of follow-up. There are also poor details about the rheumatological treatments. In table 1 we see that anti TNF therapy has been prescribed to 4 patients, but in the text there is no mention about it and above all about the followup of these 4 patients. The Discussion and Conclusions are not adequately supported by the literature data, the authors don’t compare their results with those previously published (Efficacy and safety of tocilizumab combined with cyclosporine A in a patient with rheumatoid arthritis and concomitant chronic hepatitis C virus infection. Giannitti C, et al. Clin Exp Rheumatol. 2013; Safety of anti-tumor necrosis factor agents in rheumatic potential carriers of occult hepatitis B virus. Giannitti C, et al. J Rheumatol. 2011)

Minor Essential Revisions: English Language should be revised, the flow chart should have more details.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

no competing interests