Reviewer's report

**Title:** Complete pathological response (ypT0N0M0) after preoperative chemotherapy alone for stage IV rectal cancer

**Version:** 5  **Date:** 4 September 2013

**Reviewer:** Andres Cervantes

**Reviewer's report:**

This case report is very clear and well written and it delivers a very clean message. It deals with an unusual case report on a stage IV rectal cancer patient who achieved a pCR after combination chemotherapy without radiotherapy.

This patient was managed properly according to current standard of care. The description is very much straight forward and can be easily followed. Data are not over-interpreted and there is no much speculation when describing or commenting on the findings.

The only point is that the first sentence in the abstract "Complete pathological response occurs in up to 25% of patients with rectal cancer who are treated with neoadjuvant chemoradiation therapy prior to pelvic surgery" is too optimistic. This statement is repeated in the main text in the Background section (second paragraph, page 4). However, when the same point is addressed at the Conclusions, the authors state: "Overall, 10-20 % of patients achieve a complete rectal pathological response after chemoradiation.", which is more realistic, but conflicting with the previous sentence.

I would recommend changing in the abstract as well as in the Background, indicating that "Complete pathological response occurs in 10-20% of patients with rectal cancer who are treated with neoadjuvant chemoradiation therapy prior to pelvic surgery".

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I have no conflict of interest to disclose