Reviewer's report

Title: Relationship between clinical characteristics and survival of gastroenteropancreatic neuroendocrine neoplasms: A single-institution analysis (1995 - 2012) in South China

Version: 1 Date: 24 September 2012

Reviewer: Frederico Costa

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript. I understand the importance of this data and I support the effort to report the Chinese NET experience.

I strongly recommend to authors to polish this manuscript and the data. This experience should be reported and I pointed out some issues bellow for consideration. I believe this cohort could become a meaningful piece of information.

Major Compulsory Revisions

On page 4: I recommend changing the first paragraph “On October 5, 2011, Steve Jobs Godfather died at his California home, due to respiratory arrest, a severe complication resulted from relapse of his previously treated pancreatic neuroendocrine carcinoma. The death of Jobs aroused widespread concern about a particular kind of tumors—neuroendocrine neoplasms, which originate from neuroendocrine cells distributed throughout the body, and comprise a heterogeneous family with a wide and complex spectrum of clinical behaviors”. The statement is not scientific and does not add meaningful information.

On page 12:

a) “Besides surgery, adjuvant therapeutic options such as chemotherapy, biological therapy and targeted therapy can be used for NENs.” This statement is not supported by the current available literature. If the authors are convinced that this statement is real, they should support with convincing references.

b) “Patients with GEP-NEC and GEP-MANEC are generally applied with cytotoxic chemotherapy agents, which are considered ineffective for GEP-NETs.” I believe the authors are referring to differences in response to chemotherapy agents according to low vs high grade tumors. Unfortunately the statement is not clear. This statement needs clarification and more supporting references.

c) “In our cohort, chemotherapy was performed in 23 patients, 3 of them died during follow-up. The most frequently used agents were platinum salts.” The statement is very vague. I recommend better data clarification and
details regarding the treatment regimens most used in China. Is the patients` death related to treatment or disease progression?

d) “In this study octreotide LAR was given to 16 patients at a dose of 20-40 mg monthly.” If carcinoid syndrome was not observed in this cohort and functional tumors correspond to a small fraction of patients, the authors should describe the indication for somatostatin analogs in China.

e) “We also proved that prognosis differed significantly according to functional status, pathological grading and classification. We also confirmed that metastasis represented a worse outcome with a mean survival of 5.0 years (P=0.000). Multivariate analysis was not done due to the small size of our series.” The data presented in this manuscript does not support this conclusion. If the authors are referring to different data set, they should add the reference.

- Minor Essential Revisions

On page 5:

a) second paragraph “Tumors with a Ki-67 index of <2% were classified as G1 tumors”, change to # 2

b) “GEP-NENs were classified as NET (G1 and G2 phases), NEC (G3 phase) and MANEC (G3 phase)”. Please, remove phase(s)

On page 6: a) “The most common sites was the pancreas, comprising 34.8%(62/178) of tumor invasion”. The phase is not clear. Please re-phrase it.

b) “Other sites included appendix, jejunum/ileum,Vater's ampulla, etc. at 12.9% (23/178)”. Please, remove etc.

c) “Local compression was rather common in nonfunctional tumors, giving rise to a variety of gastrointestinal manifestations.” I don’t understand what the authors mean with local compression.

On page 7: “Over half (51.5%) of the tumors were at G1 phase.” Please, change to “were G1”.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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

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'