Reviewer’s report

Title: Paroxysmal hypertension secondary to a periprostatic pheochromocytoma: case report and review of the literature.

Version: 1 Date: 15 July 2013

Reviewer: Urs D Lichtenauer

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions
- line 8 Abstract page: the authors describe a coincidental discovery of the tumor upon rectal examination. However, in line 6 auf the conclusion page and line 23 of the case presentation page, the tumor seems to be discovered upon a screening CT scan. Please clarify.
- line 4 case presentation: The patient suffers from iron-deficiency anemia since 2010. Line 20 same page: cause of anemia still unclear. Line 4 conclusion: unexplained microcytic anemia. Please clarify. What turned out to be the cause for the anemia in the end?
- line 15 case presentation page 6: the diagnosis of primary hyperparathyroidism is not comprehensible for the reader: What were the calcium and phosphate serum und urine concentration? What were the intact PTH and the vitamin D levels? Secondary hyperparathyroidism due to vitamin D deficiency must be excluded as it is a common finding in the elderly. If the diagnosis of primary hyperparathyroidism is correct, the authors should include in the text, how they want to control hypercalcemia and osteoporosis of this Patient in the future and if exploratory parathyroidectomy is planned.
- line 17 case presentation page 6: MEN2B is not associated with primary hyperparathyroidism and should be excluded from the text.
- line 17 conclusion: This is not the classical triad. Please see also comment under Discretionary Revisions
- what were the postoperative/follow-up metanephrine levels as a proof that the catecholamine excess was attributed to the tumor?

Minor Essential Revisions
- line 8 case presentation page 6: The authors should mention the percentage of Ki-67 positive cells, as this figure is discussed as a marker to improve the staging/grading system. What was the PASS-score?
- line 14 case presentation page 6: Were plasma-metanephrines measured, as this measurement is the most sensitive and specific method available today?
- case presentation page 6: Although the elevated urine normetanephrines in this case seem clearly related to the tumor, the authors should discuss the exclusion of factors that are known to lead to false positive results such as a history of
psychiatric disease and psychiatric drugs, smoking, etc. See also postoperative metanephrine Levels in the Major Compulsory Revisions section.

- line 5 case presentation: ‘he’ instead of ‘het’ as just one example. Please re-read the manuscript carefully to eradicate misspellings. Although the manuscript is clearly written and a pleasure to read, some sentences are sloppily expressed, so to enhance the overall impression, I would recommend improve some of the wording.

**Discretionary Revisions**

- Line 8 Abstract page: it would be nice if the tumor size could be integrated
- Line 6 background: the classic clinical triad of pheos includes: headaches, sweating, and palpitations in a hypertensive patient. Paroxysms of hypertension are present in less than 40 - 50% of cases only. Paleness as a symptom is present in 30 - 60 % of cases. Maybe the authors could differentiate between the well accepted triad and the symptoms they found in their patient.
- line 3 case presentation: ‘medicine department’ instead of ‘medicine ward’?
- an extra-adrenal pheochromocytoma manifestation of a hereditary paraganglioma syndrome in a 76 year old is highly unlikely. Maybe the authors should point out, that such an extensive and expensive genetic evaluation is not recommended routinely in such a patient.
- line 8 case presentation page 7: 7 days of pretreatment is quite short in a Patient with ischemic heart disease, as in most medical centers, adrenergic blockade usually starts 7–14 d preoperatively. Since this is a controversial field, it would be interesting to learn, if the authors had particular reasons to use doxazosine and nifedipin, as phenoxbenzamine is more widely being used.

**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