Reviewer's report

Title: Low Mmp 9 and VEGF levels predict good oncologic outcome in mid and low rectal cancer patients with neoadjuvant chemoradiation

Version: 1 Date: 5 September 2012

Reviewer: Raphaël Maréchal

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revision

1. Methods:

page 8, Laboratory methods section:

I suggest to organise all of the immunohistochemical and ELISA information in different section.

The authors should specify how they performed Bcl-2 immunostaining.

Statistical analysis:

It is unclear if you performed multivariate analysis or not. How did you selected the variables for multivariate models?

2. Results:

Overall the results reported in this manuscript are insufficient and many discrepancies appear between the value reported in the text and those reported in the tables. For example, the authors have to give the results of the univariate and multivariate analysis for both the DFS and OS.

Page 12, paragraph 4: the p-value reported in the text for bax and MMP9 are different from those reported in the table 5.

page 13, paragraph 2: The authors mentioned that VEGF, MMP-9, N+ status and PCR approached significance for OS and DFS and report the readers to the table 7. (1) It is unclear while the table 7 reported multivariate analysis or univariate analysis, (2) the p-value reported in the table 7 are clearly non-significant, (3) the authors have not reported the p-value (univariate and multivariate analysis) for the DFS.

3. Discussion:

It seems inappropriate to propose a prospective trial to "confirm" your results. As aforementioned, any of the variables evaluated in your study were significantly associated with the OS.

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