**Reviewer's report**

**Title:** Prognostic impact of CD57, CD68, M-CSF, CSF-1R, Ki67 and TGF-beta in Soft Tissue Sarcomas

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 21 March 2012

**Reviewer:** Thomas Greither

**Reviewer's report:**

The manuscript "Prognostic impact of CD57, CD68, M-CSF, CSF-1R, Ki67 and TGF-beta in Soft Tissue Sarcomas" by Sørbye et al. covers a very interesting topic, namely the association of the prognosis of soft tissue sarcoma patients and the presence of markers of the innate immune systems in the individual tumors. The paper is written very well, the English is clear and understandable. The methods are described proper; the overall study included an elaborated methodology and was performed thoroughly.

I have only discretionary revisions to state:

1) Although the writing in general is very good, the whole manuscript should be revised for some minor inconsistencies. For example, on p.3, line 2: "...more than 50 different histological entities and [they] comprise less than..."; p.4, l. 4 the term (Sørbye 2012) # can be deleted, the numerical reference [25] is enough, same in l.17; p.5, l.10: change carsinosarcomas to carcinosarcomas?; the legend in table 2 and 3 is displaced (Patient-s); in figure 2, last graph: TGF-beta is spelled wrong (TFG-beta); also: personally, I prefer the abbreviation STS also in the plural without an additional “s” ("STSS", f.e. p.3, l.3 or p.11, l.6). I know, this sounds pedantic, however, I presume it would improve the readability of the paper.

2) The finding, that Ki67 in the capsule is also a predictor of prognosis, was only shortly discussed by the authors. Was a correlation to metastasis tested statistically? May someone hypothesize, that an increased expression of Ki67 can be the result of on increased migration of fast-proliferating cells in the peritumoral capsule or could there be an enhanced proliferation effect of tumor-released cytokines on the stromal cells? Maybe, the authors could discuss this finding in a few sentences more.

3) In figure 2, univariate analysis of co-expression M-CSF and TGF-beta shows only 12 patients in the low M-CSF, high TGF-beta group. Are there any literature pointing towards a regulation of M-CSF expression by TGF-beta? In the univariate analysis presented TGF-beta seems to be the dominating factor, while low or high M-CSF expression in combination with low TGF-beta expression does not seem to influence prognosis significantly. Maybe, the authors could discuss this impression in one or two sentences.

Finally, I want to thank the authors for sharing this very worth-reading and
well-written article with the scientific community. Personally, in reading I experienced new and interesting associations between STS biology, prognosis and the immune system. Many greetings from Germany and have a nice week.

**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.