Author's response to reviews

Title: alphaB-crystallin is a marker of aggressive breast cancer behavior but does not independently predict for patient outcome: A combined analysis of two randomized studies

Authors:

Triantafyllia Koletsa (koletsa@med.auth.gr)
Flora Stavridi (florastavridi@yahoo.co.uk)
Mattheos Bobos (mbobos@auth.gr)
Ioannis Kostopoulos (kostop@med.auth.gr)
Vassiliki Kotoula (ykotoula@auth.gr)
Anastasia G. Eleftheraki (a_eleftheraki@hecog.ondsl.gr)
Irene Konstantopoulou (reena@rrp.demokritos.gr)
Christos Papadimitriou (chr_papadim@yahoo.gr)
Anna Batistatou (abatista@cc.uoi.gr)
Helen Gogas (hgogas@hol.gr)
Angelos Koutras (angkoutr@otenet.gr)
Dimosthenis V. Skarlos (hecogiat@otenet.gr)
George Pentheroudakis (gpenthal@otenet.gr)
Ioannis Efstratiou (dr.efstratiou@gmail.com)
Dimitrios Pectasides (pectasid@otenet.gr)
George Fountzilas (fountzil@auth.gr)

Version: 3 Date: 4 June 2014

Author's response to reviews: see over
MS 2047166023103063 Answer Letter

Triantafyllia Koletsu et al

Dear Dr. Morawska,

In response to your May 7, 2014 e-mail, we are submitting the 2nd revision of our manuscript MS 2047166023103063 “alphaB-crystallin is a marker of aggressive breast cancer behavior but does not independently predict for patient outcome: A combined analysis of two randomized studies”.

We would like to thank you and the reviewers for your helpful and insightful comments. We have revised our manuscript according to these comments, using “tracked changes”. Minor other changes were also made throughout the manuscript, to ensure that our revised manuscript conforms to the journal style, clearly visible by the use of “tracked changes”, as well. Please find below our point-by-point response to the comments made by the Editorial Team and the Reviewers.

Comments from the Editorial Team

Your manuscript has now been peer reviewed and the comments are accessible in PDF format from the links below. Do let us know if you have any problems opening the files. We apologize for the delay you have experienced. However, as none of the other reviewers were able to provide advice regarding the statistical analysis in your manuscript, we had to consult a statistical adviser. He has now assessed your manuscript and you can find his comments below (Referee 4).

We would be grateful if you could address the comments in a revised manuscript and provide a cover letter giving a point-by-point response to the concerns.

We have revised our manuscript according to the comments. The file name is: “Revised Manuscript_ MS 2047166023103063.doc”. All changes are clearly visible by using “track changes”.

June 4, 2014
Please also ensure that your revised manuscript conforms to the journal style (http://www.biomedcentral.com/info/ifora/medicine_journals). It is important that your files are correctly formatted.

Our revised manuscript conforms to the journal style with all files being correctly formatted.

We look forward to receiving your revised manuscript by 6 June 2014. If you imagine that it will take longer to prepare please give us some estimate of when we can expect it.

Reviewer’s reports

Referee 1

Version: 2

Date: 10 December 2013

Reviewer: Gary Tse

Reviewer's report:

Appropriate changes have been made.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable.

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests: 'I declare that I have no competing interests'

Referee 2

Version: 2

Date: 24 December 2013

Reviewer: Vincent Cryns
Reviewer's report:

The authors have addressed this reviewer's concerns.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests: I have no competing interests.

Referee 4

Version: 2

Date: 29 April 2014

Reviewer: Christopher Stevenson

Reviewer's report:

The details of this paper are outside my professional expertise, so I will confine my comments to the statistical analysis.

Minor essential revisions:

1. Overall the statistical analyses performed were appropriate for the data and hypotheses - provided that a non-parametric method is appropriate for these data. However, it is not clear why the authors chose to use non-parametric methods rather than parametric methods. I would like to see an explanation of why they chose these methods.

   Non-parametric methods were chosen for continuous data, due the fact that the assumptions for performing parametric tests were not fulfilled (the data were not normally distributed). A statement to that effect was added to the "Statistical analysis" Section of the manuscript (page 10).

2. I would like to see tables summarizing the results of all the statistical analyses - including the univariate survival analysis - rather than just having a discussion in the text. In particular, I would like to see the test statistics and p values for each result rather than just being told that they 'not significant'. Also, where results are presented
in figures, I would like to see a test statistic value and p value on the figure (eg figure 2).

In complete agreement with the reviewer, the univariate Cox regression analysis is now presented in Table 7, while the interactions of all examined markers with paclitaxel treatment in terms of DFS and OS are shown in Table 8. The test statistics and p-values for all results are included in the tables. In addition, the test statistics and p-values are now included in Figure 2 and deleted from the corresponding Figure legend.

3. I'm not sure if this is just the way my copy was printed, but the figure heading refers to figures 3A and 3B, but the figures themselves are labelled Figure 3 and Figure 4

To avoid this, Figures 3A and 3B are now together in one figure (Figure 3).

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests: I declare that I have no competing interests

We hope that our revision of the manuscript and answers to the comments of the reviewer are satisfactory and that you will now find our work acceptable for publication in BMC Clinical Pathology.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Triantafyllia Koletsia, MD

On behalf of the authors