Reviewer's report

Title: Experiencing Neutropenia: Quality of Life Interviews with Adult Cancer Patients

Version: 1 Date: 17 April 2005

Reviewer: Paolo Pedrazzoli

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General

Fortner and colleagues report on a study evaluating quality of life in patients with chemotherapy-related grade IV neutropenia. The major limitation of this paper is the fact that very few, if any, of QoL parameters measured in this study can be ascribed to neutropenia. In fact, several concomitant clinical and psychological aspects, including type of chemotherapy, treatment with growth factors (it is not specified if patients have received such medications) or even antibiotics, age, underlying disease, grade of anemia etc., capacity of coping with their tumor etc. may account for most of the specific problems reported. In addition grade IV neutropenia may present with clinical aspects (depending on its duration, the presence of fever or documented infection) varying from absence of symptoms to life threatening complication requiring prompt hospitalisation. For this reasons and because of the limited number of patients enrolled in this study, it is very difficult, in my opinion, to draw any conclusion on the association between neutropenia and QoL parameters. A larger study including an homogeneous cohort of patients (also in terms of disease and type of chemotherapy) is required.

What next?: Reject because scientifically unsound

Level of interest: An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests