Reviewer's report

Title: Oesophagectomy rates and post-resection outcomes in patients with cancer of the oesophagus and gastro-oesophageal junction: A population-based study using linked health administrative linked data.

Version: 1 Date: 11 July 2012

Reviewer: Toshiaki Tanaka

Reviewer's report:

The authors investigated the resection rates and surgical outcomes in cancers of the esophagus and gastroesophageal cancer, and compared the outcomes in esophageal cancer alone with those in esophageal and gastroesophageal cancer. For this purpose, the authors used a national database in Australia. This is a valuable and unique report indicating that the inclusion of gastroesophageal cancer alters surgical outcomes compared to those of esophageal cancer alone.

There are several points requiring clarification:

1. How many patients were treated with other modalities, such as chemoradiotherapy, radiotherapy, chemotherapy, best supportive care, and others? Please provide more information about the treatment modalities in all patients in Table 1.

2. The proportion of patients with good performance status (CCI: 0) and locoregional disease seems rather high. What is the reason for choice of non-surgical treatment for these patients? What treatment did they receive? These should be addressed in the discussion.

3. The proportion of patients with each surgery type seems same for esophageal cancer or gastroesophageal cancer. Transhiatal esophagectomy was performed in 71.6% patient with esophageal cancer and 73.1% with gastroesophageal cancer, and abdothoracic esophagectomy was 15.7% vs 15.8%. What made the difference in post-ope. complication rate in these two cancers? This should be addressed in the discussion.

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'