Reviewer’s report

Title: Circulating Tumor Cells: A Tool That Has Come of Age

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Reviewer: Tanja Fehm

Reviewer’s report:

The review by Cristofanilli and his groups summarizes the current status of the clinical value of CTCs in metastatic breast cancer. The review is well written and reviews most recent papers published in this field. However some topics are missing and should be added to complete the review (see below).

The review can be accepted with minor revisions:

1. It should be mentioned in the introduction that this review focus on the clinical value of CTCs in metastatic breast cancer since no data from adjuvant trials are discussed.

2. The chapter of the predictive and prognostic capability is very lengthy. The authors should presented the data in a table

3. Currently it is discussed that the CTCs may be used to reevaluate predictive markers (e.g. HER2) in the metastatic setting. The authors should also include this topic in their review and discuss the importance of phenotyping for optimization of palliative treatment (e.g. Meng et al.)

4. There are already data available on the expression of EMT and stem cell markers in CTCs in the metastatic setting (Kasimir-Bauer et. al.) These data are also missing to make the review complete.

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