Reviewer's report

Title: Meta-analysis of trials comparing anastrozole and tamoxifen for adjuvant treatment of postmenopausal women with early breast cancer

Version: 3 Date: 3 June 2008

Reviewer: Michael Dixon

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I have no real problems with this meta-analysis except that it adds very little to our current knowledge.

A combined analysis of sequencing switching trials has already been completed and published and as all but one of the trials included in the current review (ie ITA 2006, ARNO 95, ABCSG-8) then the meta-analysis adds very little to what we already know.

The problem is the ATAC study has been updated and the review does not include the updated data presented last year in San Antonio.

While I accept the authors have done the best with what is available, the reality is that this is a meta-analysis of very few trials.

What people want to know is whether one aromatase inhibitor is superior to the others and whether switching is better than upfront aromatase inhibitors. These questions cannot be addressed by such a review.

Although this paper looks at the comparison of anastrozole and tamoxifen in the adjuvant setting it does not mention the comparisons of anastrozole and tamoxifen in the metastatic and neoadjuvant settings which are somewhat less impressive at least in regards to the advantage of anastrozole compared with tamoxifen and the authors might wish to comment on this.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.