Reviewer's report

Title: Multiple myeloma presenting with high output heart failure and improving with anti-angiogenesis therapy: a case series and review of the literature

Version: 2 Date: 20 May 2008

Reviewer: Nicola Mumoli

I am familiar with the literature and believe that this case meets one of the 9 criteria for evaluation in the journal: Presentations, diagnoses and/or management of new and emerging diseases

Has the case been reported coherently?: Yes

Is the case report authentic?: No

Is this case worth reporting?: Yes

Is the case report persuasive?: Yes

Does the case report have explanatory value?: Yes

Does the case report have diagnostic value?: No

Will the case report make a difference to clinical practice?: No

Is the anonymity of the patient protected?: Yes

Comments to authors:

High output heart failure is under-recognized in multiple myeloma. The cases reported underscore the difficult treatment of this condition. However, the conclusions of the authors deserve some comments.

Extensive bone damage seems to be a necessary but not sufficient condition, because only a minority of myeloma patients actually develop this complication. This seems an associated finding, and a cause-effect mechanism remains to be ascertained. Moreover, the first patient was aggressively treated with diuretics in the setting of hypercalcemia, a condition that usually requires hyperhydration before diuretics, in order to preserve the patient's blood volume. This may have contributed to the unfavourable course.

Both patients were treated with dexamethasone, universally recognized as the most effective treatment of both newly diagnosed or refractory/relapsed myeloma: the effect of thalidomide or lenalidomide, if any, in these two cases remains speculative. Furthermore, the timing of the response is more consistent with the steroid effect than with an anti-angiogenetic one.
In conclusion, these cases are worthy reporting as they recall to our mind an exceptionally difficult myeloma-related condition; however I suggest a major revision in order to minimize speculative statements that require special investigations, not case reports, to be demonstrated.

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests