Reviewer's report

Title: Endoscopic ultrasound-guided sampling of solid pancreatic masses: 22-gauge aspiration versus 25-gauge biopsy needles

Version: 1 Date: 23 April 2015

Reviewer: Michael Huw Chapman

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions:

1. The measured outcomes reported in tables 4 and 5 are unclear without referring to the methods and so I suggest that the data is either presented in another format or the legend includes a brief description of how the data is presented so that it can be more easily interpreted.

2. These data are retrospective review of data but this is not immediately clear reading the abstract and methods to make it clear it is not an RCT. Also, I imagine from reading the methods that the 2 groups were separated over time with the older group sampled using the 22G needle and the newer group with the 25g needle. These groups therefore may have introduced other bias such as improved operator techniques so this requires clarification.

Minor discretionary reviews:

1. The authors report other similar data from alternative published studies with reported sensitivities of 64% - 95% but report their own sensitivity as 60% and 32%. The published series may overestimate the sensitivity of FNA sampling for diagnosis of pancreatic cancer but this observation should be discussed further.

Other comments:

1. Generally well written
2. The numbers included are small and so of limited value compared to already published series.
3. The 2 groups, although not randomised and likely involve different time frames, do appear sufficiently similar to make a comparison.
4. Grouping of definite and suspicious for malignancy is debatable in terms of suitability for clinical confirmation of cancer although in my view is acceptable. This issue may need clarification and discussion.
5. Presenting the data on other parameters such as quantity of blood staining is of some clinical interest to those in the area and is therefore suitable for inclusion but probably adds little to the 'bottom line' of the final diagnosis of cancer v no cancer.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely
related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I have received a travel grant from the company who manufacture the equipment assessed in this manuscript but this has no bearing on the question assessed by the paper so should not be relevant.