Reviewer’s report

Title: A pilot study of individualized comprehensive treatment for gastric cancer with para-aortic lymph node metastases

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Reviewer: Christoph Elsing

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The study of Guili Li describes the treatment of 47 (finally 46) patients with gastric cancer and para-aortic lymph node metastases. Patients received first neoadjuvant intravenous and intra-arterial chemotherapy and went then either to surgery or in case of progressive or stable disease to further chemotherapy. When patients responded to chemotherapy secondly they also received surgery. Finally, 32 patients (69%) proceeded to surgery and were thereafter treated with chemotherapy and local radiotherapy. Patients with surgery had in conclusion a significant better survival (12 month vs. 29 month).

This study again shows that patients with gastric cancer benefit from surgery. So, all attempt should be made to bring patients in operable conditions. This includes also the proof that the cancer disease responds to chemotherapy. To reduce toxicity, this chemotherapy can be given intravenous and intra-arterial and this is the progress of this study.

In this very elective group of patients, this treatment protocol is a possible alternative.

However, the treatment protocol and the indication for radiotherapy is not clearly described. It would be also interesting to know how many patients with gastric cancer were evaluated for the study but did finally not fulfill the inclusion criteria. It seems that this group of patients represents a subgroup of gastric cancer patients, since most of them had adenocarcinoma, were male and had a low differentiation, how was the Her2 neu receptor status of this patient group.

In different part of the manuscript the language is not understandable, some sentences are incomplete, there are errors in describing the treatment protocols, etc… (lines 116/117, 187, 251, 275, 298, 306,326/327335-337)

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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'