Reviewer's report

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

Version: 2 Date: 10 August 2015

Reviewer: Cuong P Duong

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An interesting study evaluating the use of aggressive systemic therapy in patients with advanced gastric cancer (locoregional and para-aortic nodal involvement without definite organ metastasis) with responders proceed to radical resection of tumour and nodal stations. Reasonable chemotherapy toxicity profile with apparently no major peri-operative morbidity and yet very good long term survival.

Need to be careful with English - misspellings, grammar eg poor. So (37), Background (69), researchers (72, 78), through (289)

PET was mentioned as Ix for recurrent tumour but not as a staging tool

Minor essential revisions:

Line 56, 57 and line 244, 245 - need to separate 1 and 2 ySR for whole group from 1, 2 and 3 ySR for surgical group as it's confusing.

2) Abstract - should not use abbreviation eg PR, CR, PD or NC until they are defined

3) Abstract - need to define no16 LN as para-aortic LN

4) Need to comment on whether laparoscopy and peritoneal cytology was performed to exclude occult peritoneal or small liver subcapsular met which can impact on outcome

5) Surgery was performed in 32 of 46 patients though path response could only be examined in 21 cases? (line 225)

6) Standard D2 gastrectomy do not resect station 16 LN so did all patients had D3 instead of D2?

7) Need to discuss the role of surgery - does it contribute to improved patient outcome or the better survival in surgical group reflect selection bias in those with favourable tumours that already responded well to systemic therapy

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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