Author’s response to reviews

Title: Exceptional serological and radiological response to sorafenib in 2 patients with advanced hepatocellular carcinoma and chronic hepatitis C viral infection: Case report and review of the literature.

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Reviewer 1:

"Response rate" should be defined in paragraph 2 of the Background.

Sentence now changed to read “… only 2-3% of patients achieve a partial response to sorafenib” (Background, paragraph 2, sentence 2)

For Case 2, the diagnosis of cirrhosis should be clarified.

Additional sentence now included “The background liver appeared cirrhotic.” (Case presentation 2, paragraph 2, sentence 2)

Reviewer 2:

General Comments:

The performance status of both patients should be mentioned – “and an Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group (ECOG) performance status of zero” added to case 1 (Case presentation 1, end of 1st paragraph); “and an ECOG performance status of 1” added to case 2 (Case presentation 2, end of 1st paragraph)
The choice for TACE as first-line therapy should be briefly explained for Case 1 as the patient has portal vein invasion. TACE has been used with good results in very selected patients with portal vein invasion, however the decision on its use varies from centre to centre.

Additional line inserted to clarify TACE, “...as the invasion into his branch portal vein was non-occlusive.” (Case presentation 1, paragraph 2, sentence 1)

During the initial post TACE period of tumour progression in Case 1, did the portal vein invasion extend?

Yes. The tumour invasion into the portal vein had advanced and was occupying virtually all of the right portal vein branch. The main and left portal veins were still patent.

Additional sentence included now “...progression of the branch portal vein invasion” (Case presentation 1, paragraph 2)

Did case 1 have any post-mortem histology available? If so, were any genetic studies carried out?

No.

Specific Comments:

Page 4

- line 40: please provide reference for 2 cases

References included as requested [9, 10]. These are actually included in the discussion section already.

Page 5

- line 41: ref 14 only needs to be at the end of this paragraph

Reference 14 removed from the middle of this paragraph as requested.

- line 53: suggest adding comma "In vitro, sorafenib,..."

Comma added as requested.