Reviewer’s report

**Title:** A randomized phase II study of capecitabine-based chemoradiation with or without bevacizumab in resectable locally advanced rectal cancer: clinical and biological features

**Version:** 2  
**Date:** 11 July 2014

**Reviewer:** Vassilis Georgoulias

**Reviewer’s report:**

minor essential revisions (which the authors can be trusted to make)

1. The authors need to provide explanation on the reasons why TME were not possible in all patients (page 6 and also in page 10). Since we are discussing about locoregional rectal cancer TME should be mandatory in well established institutions, and the reasons why it was not performed in 100% of the cases needs to be clearly explained - (surgeon’s fault? metastatic disease previously missed? other reason? ). The respective number of patients and percentage next to every reason should be added before the manuscript is accepted for publication, because we cannot conclude that “more chemotherapy saves patients from inadequate surgery”. Furthermore, the fact that TME was not performed in all patients must be added at the end of the discussion with the other limitations of the study.

2. It should be clearly explained why such a high percentage of patients having distant metastases at the time of surgery was missed. Was a review of the baseline CTs/MRIs performed for those patients? Were they initially metastatic and wrongly included, or did they progress during neoadjuvant treatment? This should be also clearly and with details elaborated and added to the limitations as well.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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