Author’s response to reviews

Title: Nuclear expression of p65 (RelA) in patients receiving post-operative radiotherapy for locally advanced squamous cell carcinoma of the head and neck

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor,

First of all, we would like to thank you and both reviewers for the thoughtful comments regarding our manuscript.

The following revisions have been made:

Editor:
1. The period of treatment has been added (page 4, line 117).

2. After re-checking the references, ref. #10 was considered not appropriate and was removed. Ref. #9 is mentioned now in a more detailed way instead (page 3, lines 75-77).

3. In order to not confuse the readers by providing three ROC analyses for the different endpoints, we have opted for using the H-score (page 4, lines 109-112 + reference #10).

The use of the H-score has led to significant alterations regarding the results of our study. The p65 expression is now significantly associated with OS and LRC on univariate analysis and with LRC on multivariate analysis. Additionally, p65 expression achieved borderline significance for OS on multivariate analysis.

These results have led to a significant changes of the entire manuscript including new figures.

We would like to thank you particularly for suggesting the H-score.

4. T-stage and N-stage have been replaced by T-classification and N-classification in the entire manuscript.
5. A paragraph regarding the HPV-methodology has been added (pages 5/6, lines 140-151).

6. The conclusions have been re-written taking into account the new results (Abstract + page 9, lines 239-241)

Reviewer B. Jeremic:
1. No revisions required.

Reviewer K-P Chang:
1. Please, see responses to the Editor’s comments, response #3.

2. Additional information has been added including 4 new references (page 7, lines 194-200 + references #13-16).

We hope that this revised manuscript meets with your approval for publication in BMC Cancer.

Sincerely,
Dirk Rades (on behalf of the authors)