Reviewer's report

Title: The prognostic role of preoperative serum albumin levels in glioblastoma patients

Version: 4 Date: 26 December 2014

Reviewer: Aaron Mammoser

Reviewer's report:

I thank the authors for taking the time to make the revisions.

While all of the revisions that I suggested have been satisfactorily addressed, in looking through the other reviewers comments, I do think that she made several valid suggestions that I'm not sure were addressed as thoroughly, particularly as pertains to steroid duration and dose as well as IDH status, which she felt were major compulsory revisions.

1. In a quick PubMed search, the article below brings to light the potential interplay between serum albumin and steroid toxicity as seen in neuro-oncology patients, though the data is noted to be limited. Certainly, in your paper, if there had been a delay from initial diagnosis to surgery such that patients were on a high dose of steroids for several days-weeks prior to surgery, it could conceivably have an effect on serum albumin level, even if there was an overnight fast, and so I agree that steroid dose and duration prior to surgery should be added.


2. While I think it would be costly to go back and confirm IDH status of all of the patients in this retrospective study, I think this issue should at least be addressed in the manuscript, as even at 10% incidence in GBM, you would expect to have potentially 20 patients with this mutation in your study, which could theoretically account for all of the 2+ year survivors (19/214).

I think addressing both of these issues would strengthen the paper.

Discretionary Revisions:

1. I think that stating definitively that serum albumin IS a prognostic factor (abstract conclusion and discussion) based on this retrospective study is still bit of a stretch. What this shows is that it is associated with prognosis. I think work still needs to be done to show whether it's prognostic in and of itself or if it's correlated with something else that is prognostic.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable
**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I have no competing interests.