Reviewer's report

Title: A novel inflammation-based prognostic score in esophageal squamous cell carcinoma: the C-reactive protein/albumin ratio

Version: Date: 18 February 2015

Reviewer: Susanne Blank

Reviewer's report:

The authors provide a paper about the prognostic impact of the CRP/Albumin ratio in patients with esophageal squamous carcinoma.

The aim and content of the study is interesting as the CRP/Albumin ratio is a prognostic score which can be determined before therapy and has a good prognostic impact in that patients' cohort. As the authors demonstrate it can improve the prediction of prognosis in combination with the mGPS.

Yet the major limitation of the study is its retrospective design without validation in another patients' cohort. One suggest would be an analysis in a test and validation set.

Major revision:

1. When exactly did you determine the CRP/Alb ratio? At time of diagnosis?
2. How many patients received neoadjuvant/perioperative treatment and which treatment did you apply? Was there a difference in CRP/alb ratio between patients with and without treatment and in its prognostic impact? Had the neoadjuvant treatment a prognostic impact? How many patients responded to the therapy? Was there a correlation of response and pretherapeutic CRP/Alb ratio?
3. How many patients had a complete tumor resection? You should include this in your analysis as it is one of the most important prognostic factors. You should also give the correlation with CRP/Alb ratio.
4. How did you make the difference between palliative and curative treatment? Was the time of definition before or after operation?
5. You should describe the method how you chose the best cut-off for the continuous prognostic indexes
6. Did the prognostic impact of CRP/Alb Ratio persist in subgroup analysis?
7. Was there a significant correlation between CRP and Albumin levels?

Minor revision:

1. Makes it sense to take a cut-off for BMI of 20,4? This is far away from overweight.
2. Language and spelling should be improved
**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests