Reviewer's report

Title: Bevacizumab And Combination CHEmotherapy in rectal cancer Until Surgery (BACCHUS): A phase II, multicentre, open-label, randomised study of neoadjuvant chemotherapy alone in Patients with high-risk cancer of the rectum

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Reviewer: Keisuke Uehara

Reviewer's report:

The authors were almost well answered to my questions. But I cannot be convinced of some points.

Again, I think this is a important clinical trial to investigate the efficacy and feasibility of neoadjuvant chemotherapy for high-risk locally advanced rectal cancer (LARC). FOLFOXIRI+BEV in neoadjuvant settings for LARC is novel strategy and we are waiting for the favorable results.

1. About ‘Reply 8’

I asked that FOLFIXIRI+BEV is more toxic regimen and expected pCR rate in this trial is too low. I think that of FOLFOX+BEV is reasonable. But, as authors reply, FOLFOX+BEV regimen achieved high rate of pCR rate of 23%, and some trials of XELOX+Bev achieved pCR rate of about 15%. This more toxic regimen should be expected to achieve higher pCR rate.

2. Inserted references (56, 57) are not listed in the ‘References’ section correctly.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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.