Reviewer's report

Title: An inflammation-based cumulative prognostic score system in patients with diffuse large B cell lymphoma in rituximab era

Version: 2 Date: 09 Apr 2017

Reviewer: Hao Wang

Reviewer's report:

1. I am concerned about the statistical methods that the authors used to determine the cut-off threshold of each of the inflammatory markers. First of all, the clinical outcomes were time-to-event PFS and OS, but the ROC analysis the authors applied was appropriate when the outcome one hoped to predict is binary. Second, my guess was that the authors may have used 3-year PFS or 3-year OS as a binary outcome in this analysis. If so, it needed to be stated in the methods. The choice of 3 year milestone time should be justified. Note that survival at a fixed time point may not represent the totality of survival over time. Furthermore, how the patients who did not have PFS or OS events and were censored prior to 3 year were handled needed clarification. The analysis was not efficient if those patients were excluded. Third, it was not clear based on which outcome the cut-off values were determined. Forth, the authors should describe how they chose the cut-off value from the ROC curve, and be more specific about what they meant by optimal cut-off.

2. The authors should clarify which endpoint ICPS score was developed from. Table 3 should indicate whether it was hazard ratio for OS or PFS outcome. Also, as a convention, the regression coefficient is denoted as β, while n often stands for sample size.

3. In Table 4 multivariate analysis, the levels of ICPS were combined into two categories ICPS<2 vs. ICPS >=2. What was the rationale? Did the authors recommend two risk groups defined by ICPS, or four risk groups corresponding to 4 levels of ICPS score?

4. The multivariate analysis in Table 4 included ICPS and individual IPI risk factors. It is also informative to do the analysis considering two variables: ICPS and IPI risk score, to further demonstrate the incremental value of ICPS.

5. The number was the exactly same for 3-year OS rates and 3-year PFS rates at every value of ICPS (Page 9). Was it a typo?
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

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