Reviewer's report

Title: CLINICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL FACTORS INFLUENCING SURVIVAL IN A LARGE COHORT OF TRIPLE-NEGATIVE BREAST CANCER PATIENTS

Version: 1 Date: 17 Sep 2017

Reviewer: Nirmala Bhoo-Pathy

Reviewer's report:

General comments:

There are minor grammatical errors throughout the manuscript that need to be addressed.

Methods:

1. Authors need to provide information on ER and PR testing, what cut-off values were used; 1% or 10%?

Given that the study included patients diagnosed between 1994 and 2015, it is possible that some patients with ER/PR positivity may have been included in this study as the change in recommendation for cut-off values by College of American Pathologists (CAP) took place in 2010

2. Was information on cause of death available? If yes, it may be worthwhile to also provide the breast cancer specific survival estimates. If information was not available, this needs to be briefly mentioned in the methods section.

3. How was missing data treated in the multivariable analyses. Was missing indicator method used or was a complete case analysis performed?

Results:

1. It may be worthwhile to separate the patients with de novo stage IV disease from the others when describing treatment patterns.
2. What is the proportion of patients receiving radiotherapy? How many received post mastectomy radiotherapy? This information should also be included in the result table.

3. Information on clinico-pathological features should be presented prior to adjuvant treatment.

4. KM curves should be censored when the number of patients at risk in the smallest subgroup has reached one third of its original size.

Discussion

1. Were the associations or lack of association between some relatively new biomarkers and OS/DFS in this study be explained by missing data?

2. A couple of statements need to be added in the discussion, on whether the differences in ER and PR cut off values between the different calendar periods may have affected study results.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

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.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics
Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

None

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal