Reviewer’s report

Title: A phase II trial of recombinant MAGE-A3 protein with immunostimulant AS15 in combination with high-dose Interleukin-2 (HDIL2) induction therapy in metastatic melanoma

Version: 0 Date: 16 Sep 2018

Reviewer: Janice Dutcher

Reviewer's report:

1. The authors need to update their comparison of the combination of IL2 and MAGE-A3 vaccine to IL2 alone. They reference Atkins 1999. However, more recent data suggest higher response rates. Consider Sullivan, et al, SITC 2016.

   This is a report of 170 patients with response rate of 18%.

2. This manuscript describes only 16 patients evaluable for response

   - Therefore a comparison of response rate is of concern, given the wide margin of confidence intervals.

3. The data presented are entirely consistent with data from treatment with IL2 alone - including the response rate and the time to CR

   - Clearly with IL2 alone this can be delayed over time. also the duration of CR.

The authors cannot claim that this is an effect of the vaccine maintenance.

4. The potential data of interest is the immune monitoring over the course of the treatment, but difficult to attribute, since this has not been done long

   - Term following IL2 treatment.

5. It is of concern that the vaccine is no longer being developed

   - Concern that the authors are over-stating the contribution of the vaccine.

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.

No

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

No

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

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Consultant for Prometheus, regarding IL2-related publications. I have never seen this report previously.

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