Reviewer’s report

Title: Late Presentation of Hepatitis B among Patients with Newly Diagnosed Hepatocellular Carcinoma: A National Cohort Study

Version: 0 Date: 08 Feb 2019

Reviewer: Reviewer 2

Reviewer’s report:

PEER REVIEWER ASSESSMENTS:

OBJECTIVE - Full research articles: is there a clear objective that addresses a testable research question(s) (brief or other article types: is there a clear objective)?

Yes - there is a clear objective

DESIGN - Is the current approach (including controls and analysis protocols) appropriate for the objective?

Yes - the approach is appropriate

EXECUTION - Are the experiments and analyses performed with technical rigor to allow confidence in the results?

Yes - experiments and analyses were performed appropriately

Statistics - Is the use of statistics in the manuscript appropriate?

Yes - appropriate statistical analyses have been used in the study

INTERPRETATION - Is the current interpretation/discussion of the results reasonable and not overstated?

Yes - the author's interpretation is reasonable

OVERALL MANUSCRIPT POTENTIAL - Is the current version of this work technically sound? If not, can revisions be made to make the work technically sound?
Yes - current version is technically sound

PEER REVIEWER COMMENTS:

GENERAL COMMENTS: In the present manuscript authors have assessed the proportion of "late presenters" (HCC diagnosed without prior diagnosis of HBV infection) among patients diagnosed with HBV-related HCC through a cohort representative of the Korean population accessing the National Health Insurance Service. The objective and its public health implication are clearly supported in the introduction. Methods are also clearly presented and adapted to the objective. However, there are minor aspects that need to be clarified in the statistical approach. In the survival analysis, dpoints such as death and date of closure of the database are defined but authors gave no information on how lost to follow-up were managed. The use of three different models is confusing: what support the use of these three models? why not using a more usual procedure to select a final multivariate model such as step-wise ascending or descending procedure to select the final model. In the result section, Table 1 should be completed with absolute numbers of participants (overall, included in the model and according to each variable category: are there any missing values?). Table 3 i don't see the added value of presenting three models, authors should identify and present the multivariate model that best predict all-cause morality.

Note: This reviewer report can be downloaded - see attached pdf file.

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

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