**Reviewer's report**

**Title:** Does External Beam Radiation Boost to Pelvic Lymph Nodes Improve Outcomes in Patients with Locally Advanced Cervical Cancer?

**Version:** 1 **Date:** 11 Sep 2018

**Reviewer:** Kathleen Essel

**Reviewer's report:**

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Interesting retrospective study evaluating the role of BRT boost to pelvic LNs amongst LACC patients w enlarged or PET avid nodes on imaging.

**Methods:** Retrospective Cohort study.

Inclusion criteria: LACC, treated w definitive RT w +LN s defined by CT/MRI >=10 mm or PET w SUV >2.5

Primary outcome: Recurrence rate
Secondary outcomes: 5 year OS, 5 year PFS

Findings: Patient w +PLNs -- EBRT boost vs no boost did not lead to significantly different recurrence rate, 5 yr PFS or 5 yr OS.

Conclusions: Well-worded. Agree that more cisplatin use in PLN neg population confounds results.

Additional comments:

--Page 5, lines 45-51. This paragraph is confusing. It is initially stated that there are 139 patients. Then it states 53 patients (79.1%) have SCC. However 53/139 does not equal 79.1%. Same with the following sentence. 60 pts (89.6%) were given concurrent cisplatin-based chemotherapy. 60/139 does not equal 89.6%.

--Page 7, Line 55. What defines a "suspicious feature?"

--Page 8, Line 54. "Patients who did not receive a nodal boost had fewer recurrences and better OS." Results show there was no significant difference amongst the two groups in recurrences or in median OS.

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 recommend additional statistical review

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

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