Reviewer's report

Title: Adjuvant chemoradiation in pancreatic cancer: impact of radiotherapy dose on survival

Version: 0 Date: 07 Apr 2019

Reviewer: James Bates

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript is addresses an important question in the field of radiation oncology and will be directly useful in the day-to-day practice of those who treat pancreatic cancer. The question of RT dose-response in the adjuvant treatment of pancreatic cancer is vital, especially given the low RT doses and split course techniques used by prior randomized studies. The authors show that the highest doses are associated with the greatest overall survival and do so with alacrity and rigorous methodology. However, there are several small changes that would improve the value of the manuscript.

1) The authors mention that "some centers [had] equipment able to deliver higher doses." Elaboration of these techniques is vital and the selection criteria for the use of these techniques important. Are these techniques methods that are readily available to most modern RT centers (IMRT/VMAT) or are the techniques more specialized such as proton therapy? An alternative consideration that needs to be discussed is the selection criteria for higher doses - it appears that patients treated with >55 Gy were more likely to have positive margins, T3/4 disease, and N+ status compared to those treated with 45 - 55 Gy. All of these factors may have played a greater role in dose selection that technical ability to dose escalate.

2) The authors state that their results are in line with a previous retrospective analysis from Hall (page 12, lines 5 - 12, reference 25). This is inaccurate as that prior analysis showed inferior survival with doses beyond 55 Gy. The authors need to better elucidate the differences between their manuscript and the previously published results.

3) Please state the organization names for the relevant cooperative groups that are discussed (EORTC, GITSG, etc).

4) Please add "The" as the first word of the discussion section (page 10, line 58).

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:

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