Reviewer’s report

Title: Survival of patients receiving systematic therapy for metachronous or synchronous metastatic renal cell carcinoma: a retrospective analysis

Version: 3 Date: 20 Dec 2018

Reviewer: Jeanette Eckel-Passow

Reviewer's report:

Summary

As noted in all of the previous reviews, there is still concern with the retrospective nature of the design and no propensity adjustment. It is not sufficient to simply state in the Discussion section that a propensity analysis could be done. Without adjusting for the propensity to receive IT or TT, the authors cannot make any conclusions regarding survival differences between the two treatments. Furthermore, since TT is a more recent treatment, as described in the Discussion section, it has short follow up than IT. This further confounds the results.

Comments

* Supplementary Figure 1: More explanation is needed regarding the 45 patients who were excluded due to "without expecting therapeutic effects).

* Supplementary Figures 2&3: Still refer to overall survival, which was not evaluated in the paper.

* Tables 1&2: Survival is added to the table; however, it is not clear what the number represents. Additionally, while the reviewer response describes what follow-up duration represents, the paper does not. Since multiple events are also provided in the table (CSS and PFS), a footnote should be included in the table to describe what follow-up duration is.

* Table 2: It is unclear what the p value for cancer specific survival denotes? If a chi-square test on the 2x2 was performed, the analysis is inappropriate.

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

No
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?
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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
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