Reviewer’s report

Title: Correlation of skin rash and overall survival in patients with pancreatic cancer treated with gemcitabine and erlotinib – results from a non-interventional multi-center study

Version: 0 Date: 20 Sep 2019

Reviewer: Robert Marsh

Reviewer's report:

I think that this is a well organized and well written study. The conclusions are supported by the data and if anything, they are conservative. It is clear that taken in aggregate, a skin rash of any kind does not result in an improvement in the OS. However, it is apparent that there is improvement in the PFS and that patients who experience a rash grade equal to or greater than 2, or over the age of 65 particularly benefit. This is clearly stated but unfortunately the numbers are not sufficient to statistically affirm these findings. Still an important observation which could be further emphasized.

The lack of data on 2nd and 3rd line therapy is a problem in assessing OS. With the development of both FOLFIRINOX and Gemcitabine/Nab-paclitaxel regimens, it is likely that some of these patients may have crossed over to other therapy and this is not accounted for or defined in the manuscript. This could have profound effects on the OS and most readers would like to see data on this. In this type of study with subsequent therapies, the DFS may be the only way to gauge the performance of the regimen under study.

I am also puzzled by the apparently long time taken to initiate therapy - up to 71 days. While this may have no effect on the study, it catches one's attention and deserves at least a comment. In the USA it would be unusual to start later than 14 days from diagnosis.

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
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