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: 03 Dec 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?

No - there are minor issues

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

No - there are minor issues

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?

No - there are minor issues

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

Probably - with minor revisions
PEER REVIEWER COMMENTS:

GENERAL COMMENTS:

This is potentially an interesting study and there are several reasons for this statement - 1) PDAC is indeed a fatal disease and 2) the idea that skin rashes can be predictive is fascinating. The rationale and analyses are presented well overall, but I do have some concerns and suggestions -

I do not like the phrase 'real world data' in keywords. Its too dramatic and even sarcastic!

The Background is just one long paragraph. I suggest breaking it down into 2 paragraphs for ease of reading, and better presentation.

One important aspect that is not very clear is the status of patients - Did all of the patients eventually succumb to this disease? Was death one of the inclusion criteria? If some of the patients are still alive, please provide clear analyses on how many patients with rashes vs no-rashes are still alive and how many from each category are dead.

Did authors find any gender-specific differences?

Authors clearly conclude that skin rashes do not correlate with better overall survival. This clearly goes against earlier studies that showed otherwise (cited articles 8 through 11). To discuss this further and meaningfully, authors need to clearly point out the relevant data from these cited reports - what exactly was reported in these individual reports - numbers and percentages along with the number of patients evaluated. Only, then a meaningful conclusion could be drawn especially with regards to a) if there is indeed a case to be made for prognostic role of rashes in PDAC and b) if the sample size in current study is to be blamed.

In continuation of my above comment, I am curious that if the overarching aim of the study was to check if earlier assertions were correct, why would the authors not plan to include enough cases to make this exercise worthwhile!

Did the tumor grades differ in their correlations with skin rashes?

Finally, the authors have performed far more analyses than what is conveyed in the Results section of the Abstract. Please re-write this section of Abstract to accurately reflect the analyses and increase the impact of the work.

REQUESTED REVISIONS:

Please refer to my detailed comments above.
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.

No

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

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
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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