Reviewer’s report

Title: A Retrospective Analysis on Metastatic Rate of the Internal Mammary Lymph Node and Its Clinical Significance in Adjuvant Radiotherapy of Breast Cancer Patients

Version: 0 Date: 23 Oct 2019

Reviewer: San Gang Wu

Reviewer's report:

The present investigated the metastatic rate of internal mammary lymph nodes (IMNs) and to provide recommendations on target volume delineation of IMNs for adjuvant radiotherapy of breast cancer patients. The results showed that the metastatic rate is high in the IMNs and we think that irradiation of the internal mammary lymphatic chain is indispensable. It is suggested that the upper bound of the internal mammary lymphatic chain should be up to the subclavian vein with 5 mm margin, thus connecting to the caudal border of supraclavicular CTV in breast cancer patients with high risk of recurrence. This study has important guiding value for the target volume contouring of breast cancer.

I have the following comments:
1. Methods: More details should be included in the Methods including enrolled and exclusion criteria; the definition of hormone receptor positive and HER2; the definition of TMN stage;
2. Results: It is appreciated to assess the risk factors related to IMN recurrence;
   The stage IIIA is 71.9%, However, only 14.9% of patients were stage IIIA in Table 1.
3. Discussion: The incidence of IMN recurrence was significantly higher than previous studies.
   More discussion should be performed the association and difference to the previous studies.
4. Limitation: Limitation should be added in this study.
5. Abbreviations: Lack of partial abbreviation such as HR, et al.

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?
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:

Acceptable

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3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

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