Reviewer’s report

Title: Emphysematous change with scleroderma-associated interstitial lung disease: The potential contribution of vasculopathy?

Version: 1 Date: 07 Jan 2018

Reviewer: Nobuhiro Akuzawa

Reviewer's report:

Authors present novel findings including radiographical and pathological characteristics regarding SSc-ILD. Basically, this manuscript is well-written. Some points should be revised.

Major points:

1. Authors refer to lung vasculopathies associated with SSc-ILD. If possible, please show data concerning pulmonary hypertension (e.g. estimated right ventricular pressure based on echocardiography), because pulmonary artery hypertension (PAH) is a fatal complication of SSc with a poor prognosis.

2. Certainly as authors say, microcirculation impairment and related vasculopathy is a hallmark of systemic sclerosis and thus may cause digital ulcers or renal crisis. Basically, SSc is a systemic disease. However, this manuscript lacks data of clinical findings (e.g. whether such findings as digital ulcers, hypertension, renal dysfunction and so on exist or not.) Please add and analyze data that may be important to evaluate general conditions of SSc patients. Moreover, please clarify medication history profile including vasodilators (endothelin receptor antagonists, PDE-5 inhibitors and prostacyclin and so on.) If possible, medication history regarding ACE-inhibitors and Ca-antagonists should be also added.

Minor Points:

1. In the Methods section: authors should be careful of usage of abbreviation(s). "Suggestive of UIP [unusual interstitial pneumonia]" is inappropriate. "Suggestive of unusual interstitial pneumonia (UIP)" is appropriate.

2. In the Method section: "The HRCT scans were analyzed for t positive findings discriminated on the basis of previous studies." Please add a brief explanation regarding "t positive findings."
3. In the Results section: "The proportion of patients who smoked was 38.1%" In my opinion, "the proportion of patients who had smoke" may be appropriate. Please clarify this point. In addition, authors probably forget to type a close bracket "3 patients (14.3%)."

4. In the Table 1: Mistyping ("mediation") should be revised.

5. EULAR/EUSTAR recommends that CYC should be considered for the treatment of SSc-ILD, but the proportion of patients treated with CYC is no more than 25% in p-PE with SSc-ILD patients. Authors had better consider and refer to recommended therapeutic strategies to p-PE with SSc-ILD.

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.

Unable to assess

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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