Reviewer’s report

Title: Neoadjuvant chemotherapy versus surgery first for resectable pancreatic cancer (Norwegian Pancreatic Cancer Trial - 1 (NorPACT)) - Study protocol for a national, multicentre randomized controlled trial

Version: 2 Date: 18 Jul 2017

Reviewer: Fuyuhiko Motoi

Reviewer's report:

1. In some cases pathological examination might reveal that the resected tumor is not optimal target for this study, such as intra-ductal papillary mucinous neoplasm or neuroendocrine neoplasms, even though the cytological confirmation was obtained before enrollment. How will you manage such cases?

> The author's reply of this concern was these cases would be correctly diagnosed and excluded preoperatively.

> I recommend that simply, you would be better to add "histological type other than ductal adenocarcinoma" to the exclusion criteria, because preoperative diagnosis is not 100%.

5. When the patient with obstructive jaundice and randomized to NT group efficacy of drainage must influence and (in some cases) it might break down the randomization (Figure 1). Randomization should be performed after appropriate biliary drainage.

> The author disagreed on this point.

> I am afraid that Group 2 (Neoadjuvant) would contain less obstructive jaundice patients and Group 1 (Surgery-First) would contain more by the management drawn by Figure 1. Does this imbalance affect complication rate compared as the secondary end point?
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.

Unable to assess

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 recommend additional statistical review

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