Reviewer’s report

Title: Palliative radiotherapy near the end of life

Version: 0 Date: 19 Dec 2018

Reviewer: Robert Olson

Reviewer’s report:

Overall comments

While this is an important topic, it is not particularly novel, and it is a relatively small sample size from a single institution. I don't think it adds much to the literature already available on the topic. However, it is useful in that it demonstrates the patterns of practice in the United States, which is often an outlier in being overly aggressive in their RT prescriptions in the palliative setting.

Major concerns

1) Consider a Bonferroni (or similar) correction given you are performing so many exploratory tests; this should also be described as a limitation in your discussion. Multivariable logistic regression (or similar) could have been performed, though your sample size is small for the number of variables that are potential candidates.

2) While table presentation in median values is useful, even more useful to clinicians would be the proportion of patients who died within 30 days by category; for example it is much more useful to tell me how many brain patients die within 30 days; or how many >80 year olds die within 30 days. It is much less useful to tell me what proportion of those that died with 30 days were brain patients; and what proportion of those who died within 30 days were >80. It is even less useful to tell me what proportion of patients who were alive >30 days were a certain cohort. If I am a clinician, I want to know what my patient's probability of death within 30 days is.

Minor concerns

1) The discussion could adhere to more standard format and grammar (e.g. one sentence paragraph without further discussion is odd; first paragraph already starts comparing to other studies, which usually is reserved for 2nd and later paragraphs; 1st paragraph could better outline why there study is unique and readers should keep reading). Grouping the arguments into more succinct arguments, with a clearer flow would also help.

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**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

**Declaration of competing interests**
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

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

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.
I declare that I have no competing interests

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal