Reviewer's report

Title: Association between levels of tumor-infiltrating lymphocytes in different subtypes of primary breast tumors and prognostic outcomes: A meta-analysis

Version: 0 Date: 15 Jan 2020

Reviewer: Kyriakos Chatzopoulos

Reviewer's report:

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I think that the manuscript has substantial merit in regard that the authors put an enormous effort into selecting the appropriate studies and their statistical methodology is appropriate. However, there are significant issues with the particular manuscript that have to be addressed:

1) There should be a table including all of the studies, listed one by one, along with the main clinicopathologic findings of interest of each one, instead of presenting a summary as it is now done in table 1.

2) The authors should break down their results section into smaller sections each one of which should address the significant findings that they report. For example, there should be different sections for tumors lacking molecular subtyping, those with complete response, those with TN phenotype, and so on. Each one of those sections should have its own subheading and its own figure, presenting only the relevant data. In its current form the results section is too densely written and difficult to follow.

3) Since the Egger's test showed likelihood of publication bias in the impact of the 10% increment of TILs in TN tumor subtype on OS and the impact of LPBC on pCR, the authors should include funnel plots depicting the relevant data. It would be actually useful to show funnel plots even in the assessments that were not likely to have publication bias.

4) The discussion section is incomplete. The authors should discuss more about the impact of their findings have on clinical practice.

5) There are several inconsistencies: Egger's test is mentioned as Egg's test in line 213; Also in line 272 they mention that "PD-1, PD-L1+ and FOXP3+ TILs" articles are included in their study, while it's clear in the methods that these had been excluded - same in discussion line 279.

6) The manuscript is overall poorly prepared: The reference style is not in keeping with the author guidelines; there are parts of text, or words that are awkwardly written (i.e. "Chi² test" in line 151 - should be "Chi-squared" or $\chi^2$; the word "Luminal" should not have the first letter capitalized - these 2 to name a few).

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

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

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