Reviewer's report

Title: Prognostic Effect of Matrix Metalloproteinase-9 in Patients with Resected Non Small Cell Lung Cancer

Version: 4 Date: 29 January 2015

Reviewer: Bernard J Park

Reviewer's report:

I thank the authors for their thoughtful and timely revision of the manuscript. I believe it is suitable for publication following some now minor revisions. Specific feedback:

1) In the Methods the authors should include a few sentences regarding how postoperative and long-term follow up was performed - they indicate that no patients were lost to follow up. That is very impressive and it would be nice for the reader to know just how they accomplished this.

2) The authors describe in the Methods (page 5 last paragraph) the methodology of calculating the IHC score, which is much appreciated. However, they still do not explain the reasoning behind using the median score as the cutoff regarding positivity of expression. WHY USE MEDIAN?

3) The authors did a good job of describing the use of adjuvant therapy in the patients with more locally advanced disease. They state that adjuvant therapy was administered more often in patients with tumor MMP-9 expression - why? Is it likely because the MMP-9 patients had higher stage disease? If so (and it seems likely), the authors should point this out in the Discussion.

4) The authors still do not explain why they chose to analyze squamous cell and adenocarcinomas separately. If it is because a higher proportion of the adenocarcinoma patients had MMP-9 expression, then just state that. Also, please specify why another analysis was not done for other histologies, like large cell neuroendocrine, sarcomatoid, etc.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests