Reviewer's report

Title: Para-aortic lymphadenectomy in advanced stage cervical cancer, a protocol for comparing safety, feasibility and diagnostic accuracy of surgical staging versus PET-CT; PALDISC trial

Version: 0 Date: 07 Aug 2017

Reviewer: Susanna Dodd

Reviewer's report:

Abstract:

Methods/Design: "Data on sensitivity, specificity, negative and positive predictive value of MRI, PET-CT and surgical staging will be documented." should be replaced by "Estimates of sensitivity, specificity, negative and positive predictive value of MRI, PET-CT and surgical staging will be presented with 95% confidence intervals."

Discussion: "When a phase 3 study is deemed necessary": "When" should be changed to "If" (also in line 100 in the main body of text)

Randomisation, blinding and allocation concealment:

"Blinding and allocation concealment are not possible."

1) Would it be possible to blind the statistical analysts or outcome assessors?

2) Allocation concealment is always possible, as it refers to the concealment of randomised allocation sequence from the randomising team/investigators until the point of randomisation. Methods of allocation concealment include sealed envelopes, telephone or web randomisation. Can the authors describe how the randomised allocations were administered?

Secondary study parameters and analysis:

1) "Including these secondary parameters will make it possible to enter these patients into a subsequent phase 3 trial." Can you explain this sentence, as it suggests that this pilot study is in fact an internal pilot within a larger phase 3 trial?
2) Add "estimates will be provided with 95% confidence intervals" to the sentence "Data on sensitivity, specificity, negative and positive predictive value of MRI, PET-CT and surgical staging will be documented in 2x2 tables."

3) Time to treatment should be estimated using Kaplan Meier estimation, summarised using medians (rather than means).

Progression to phase 3 trial: How will the authors determine whether or not this study design is feasible, safe and necessary for progression to phase 3 trial? Can the authors add specific criteria for progression to a phase 3 trial?

**Level of interest**
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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