

Dear sir/ madam,

We submit a revised form of our invited research article entitled: “ Pre-treatment platelet counts as a prognostic and predictive factor in stage II and III rectal adenocarcinoma” for publication in World Journal of Gastrointestinal Oncology.

This article represents original work and is not considered for publication elsewhere. We declare no conflicts of interest regarding this article.

Reviewers comments (in red) and our responses are below.

COMMENTS TO AUTHORS

Interesting paper, well written. Good discussion. Main limitation is with regard to limited numbers and only classification being low or high platelet count groups for comparison. Perhaps a larger patient series would have allowed for a quantitative analysis

We thank the reviewer for his kind comments. The number of patients available for this analysis was indeed limited and for this reason we have analysed patients only in two categories regarding their platelet counts. Further categorization would have made groups very small and statistical analyses difficult due to small numbers.

COMMENTS TO AUTHORS

Congratulations on the article. It is simple in its approach, low cost but high clinical performance. I understand the possible relationship of thrombocytosis with local control and survival but it is curious the association with the local response to treatment. And the hypothesis that you throw at the end of the article is very promising. Thank you very much for making the investigation.

We thank the reviewer for his kind comments. The prognostic value of platelet counts regarding the pathologic response to neo-adjuvant treatment in rectal cancer is the main novelty of our investigation. As we mention in our discussion, a significant amount of

preclinical and clinical data shed light to possible pathogenic mechanisms of this prognostic association.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ioannis Voutsadakis', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ioannis Voutsadakis MD, PhD

ID 00181208