

RE: Manuscript “Stereotactic body radiotherapy combined with sintilimab in patients with recurrent or oligometastatic hepatocellular carcinoma: A phase II clinical trial” (Manuscript NO.: 84593, Clinical Trials Study)

Dear editor:

“Stereotactic body radiotherapy combined with sintilimab in patients with recurrent or oligometastatic hepatocellular carcinoma: A phase II clinical trial”. We would like to thank *World Journal of Gastroenterology* for giving us the opportunity to revise manuscript. We have carefully taken the comments into consideration in preparing our revision, which has resulted in a paper that is more clear and compelling. The point-by-point responses are attached after this letter. The revisions were highlighted to the text with tracked, have been prepared.

The manuscript has not been published previously, in any language, in whole or in part, and is not currently under consideration elsewhere. None of the authors have any competing financial interest to report.

Thank you for considering our manuscript for publication in your esteemed journal.

Point-By-Point Response

Reviewer #1:

General comments: Dear Authors, Thank you very much for submitting your work to the World Journal of Gastroenterology. This is a very well conducted trial on a novel combination of treatments for advanced HCC. Firstly, I think that the manuscript is overall very well written, with each section serving its purpose. Secondly, the methodology is robust for the objective of the trial, hence results are reliable and generalizable. Results are encouraging in the sense that they are highlighting the combination of Sintilimab and SBRT as a safe and very effective option. I think that overall the manuscript fulfils the stringent criteria for publication in the Journal and I recommend in favor of acceptance.

Response: We appreciate the reviewer provide these kindly comments.

Reviewer #2:

General comments: this study reports the results of a non-comparative phase 2 trial of hcc treatment with SBRT and sintilimab. the results of PFS, OS and ORR are impressive. the authors suggest that this combination could become a new treatment option. several nuances could be added in the discussion: - almost all patients are carriers of viral hepatitis B, the conclusions of this work can therefore only concern patients with viral hepatitis B - the good results of stereotactic external radiotherapy at doses greater than 54 Gy should be mentioned in the discussion, as well as radio-embolization which regularly delivers doses to the tumor greater than 100 Gy - these excellent results must be confirmed in randomized studies versus stereotactic external radiotherapy without immunotherapy or versus radioembolization

Response: As behalf of all co-authors, I would like to appreciate this referee due to thoughtful comments proposed by the peer review. After we revised the manuscript, those significant issues could be changed. Firstly, the conclusions have already changed and addressed viral hepatitis B, and the sentence was changed into: "Considering mostly included patients (96%) infected with hepatitis B, this result suggests that SBRT combined with sintilimab may be a new treatment option for

patients with recurrent or oligometastatic HCC and infected with hepatitis B.” Secondly, the dose of SBRT have already addressed and the following sentence was added in Discussion section: “This study demonstrated that SBRT delivered at a median dose of 54 Gy in 6 fractions plus sintilimab achieved a remarkable PFS period of 19.7 months and an outstanding ORR of 96% in such patients.” Finally, the conclusions were changed into: “Further large-scale, parallel-control randomized controlled trials should be conducted to compare the effects of SBRT plus sintilimab with other treatments, including SBRT without immunotherapy or radioembolization delivers doses to the tumor greater than 100 Gy.”

Science editor:

General comments: The manuscript has been peer-reviewed, and it's ready for the first decision.

Language Quality: Grade A (Priority publishing)

Scientific Quality: Grade B (Very good)

Response: We appreciate the reviewer provide these kindly comments.

Company editor-in-chief:

I have reviewed the Peer-Review Report, the full text of the manuscript, and the relevant ethics documents, all of which have met the basic publishing requirements of the World Journal of Gastroenterology, and the manuscript is conditionally accepted. I have sent the manuscript to the author(s) for its revision according to the Peer-Review Report, Editorial Office's comments and the Criteria for Manuscript Revision by Authors. Please provide decomposable Figures (in which all components are movable and editable), organize them into a single PowerPoint file. Please authors are required to provide standard three-line tables, that is, only the top line, bottom line, and column line are displayed, while other table lines are hidden. The contents of each cell in the table should conform to the editing specifications, and the lines of each row or column of the table should be aligned. Do not use carriage returns or spaces to replace

lines or vertical lines and do not segment cell content. Please check and confirm whether the figures are original (i.e. generated de novo by the author(s) for this paper). If the picture is 'original', the author needs to add the following copyright information to the bottom right-hand side of the picture in PowerPoint (PPT): Copyright ©The Author(s) 2022. Before final acceptance, when revising the manuscript, the author must supplement and improve the highlights of the latest cutting-edge research results, thereby further improving the content of the manuscript. To this end, authors are advised to apply a new tool, the Reference Citation Analysis (RCA). RCA is an artificial intelligence technology-based open multidisciplinary citation analysis database. In it, upon obtaining search results from the keywords entered by the author, "Impact Index Per Article" under "Ranked by" should be selected to find the latest highlight articles, which can then be used to further improve an article under preparation/peer-review/revision. Please visit our RCA database for more information at: <https://www.referencecitationanalysis.com/>.

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