LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Challenges in Personalizing Decisions on Whole, Partial or No Breast Irradiation and Extent of Surgery for Early Breast Cancer

TO THE EDITORS:

We would like to thank Tsekeris et al. for their helpful review of our recent report in the *Annals of Surgical Oncology* on outcomes of younger women treated with accelerated partial breast irradiation (APBI) with the MammoSite® device on the Registry Trial.¹ We would like to reiterate that our report was not meant to definitively assess the suitability of APBI in younger women. Certainly, the potential for hidden biases exists with any nonrandomized comparison. It should, however, be pointed out that the two cohorts, younger and older women, had comparable distributions of clinicopathological features which may contribute to the risk of local failure, and the overall population on the Registry Trial is relatively homogeneous. No attempt was made to control or to account for family history or histologic subtype (luminal A versus basal, etc.), nor to test patients for hereditary breast cancer genes.

To the best of our knowledge, we have reported outcomes on the largest prospectively studied cohort of women under 50 years of age treated with APBI. Our

results show local control rates that meet expectation and are not statistically different from the control group of older women. As pointed out by Tsekeris et al., results from ongoing randomized trials will hopefully allow us to risk-stratify and triage APBI candidates appropriately; we anticipate meaningful data from these trials around 2020. Clinicians are encouraged to continue enrolling eligible patients on these trials.

The comments of Tsekeris et al on the potential for (1) inclusion of *BRCA* mutation carriers on APBI trials, (2) microscopic foci of disease beyond the APBI treatment volume, and (3) and unidentified genetic and epigenetic factors that influence local control may be salient points of discussion but are beyond the scope of our report.

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REFERENCE

1. Khan AJ, Vicini F, Beitsch P, Haffty BG, et al. Local control, toxicity, and cosmesis in women younger than 50 enrolled on the American Society of Breast Surgeons MammoSite Radiation Therapy System Registry Trial. *Ann Surg Oncol*. 2009;16(6): 1612–8.