Time for a randomised clinical trial evaluating breast conserving surgery compared to mastectomy in ipsilateral multifocal breast cancer (MFBC)?

Nijenhuis et al. (2015) are to be commended for reviewing the role of breast-conserving surgery (BCS) in the treatment of Multi-focal Breast Cancers (MFBC) [1]. Currently, evidence-based guidelines on recommended surgical treatments in MFBC are based on limited evidence. A systematic review [2] critically evaluating the published literature has led us to conclude the following: 1) Studies of MFBC would benefit from standardized imaging, ideally with MRI providing detailed and accurate anatomic extent; 2) Modern trials would ideally evaluate neoadjuvant therapy, where therapeutic response can be evaluated; 3) Tumour subtype (immunohistochemical markers) of each cancer should be used in a minimized randomization design; 4) There is poor clinical evidence for the feasibility of dual tumour bed radiotherapy (RT) boosting and its impact on outcomes; 5) Meta-analyses on RT for unifocal cancers underline the significance of 10-year first recurrence and not breast cancer death; 6) Effect-sizes for 5-year local recurrence requires intergroup comparisons of surgery types (BCS versus mastectomy) far in excess of reported studies, where multicentric cancers are included and MFBC are clinically diagnosed; 7) Lack of convincing outcomes data on 5-year local recurrence after BCS is motivating a large international collaborative supported by respective international and national associations of breast surgery.

References
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Authors (* Corresponding author)
Z.E. Winters*, J. Horsnell
Patient-Centred and Clinical Outcomes Research Group, University of Bristol, Learning and Research Building Level 2, Southmead Hospital, Bristol, BS10 5NB, UK
P. Schmid
Barts Cancer Centre, Queen Mary University of London, Old Anatomy Building, Charterhouse Square, London EC1M 6BQ, UK
J.L. Jones
Centre for Tumour Biology, John Vane Science Building, Barts Cancer Institute, Queen Mary University of London, Queen Mary University of London, EC1M 6BQ, UK
A. Shaaban
Histopathology, Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham and University of Birmingham, Mindelsohn Way, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2WB, UK
A.J. Maxwell
Nightingale Centre and Genesis Prevention Centre, University Hospital of South Manchester, Southmoor Road, Manchester M23 9LT, UK
N. Williams
Surgical and Interventional Trials Unit, Division of Surgery and Interventional Science, 132 Hampstead Road, London University College London, NW1 2BX, UK
L. Esserman
University California San Francisco Carol Franc Buck Breast Care Center, 1600 Divisadero Box 1710, San Francisco, CA 94115, USA
I. Jatoi
Division of Surgical Oncology and Endocrine Surgery, Department of Surgery, University of Texas Health Science Center, 7703 Floyd Curl Drive, Mail Code 7738, San Antonio, TX 78229-3900, USA
A.M. Brunt
Breast Cancer Centre, University Hospitals of North Midlands and Keele University, Stoke on Trent ST4 6QG, UK
on behalf of the MIAMI (Multiple Ipsilateral breast conserving surgery versus mastectomy) Trial Management Group