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Letter to the Editor

Reply to comments on ‘COVID-19 in patients with neuroendocrine neoplasms: Preliminary results of a worldwide survey (The INTENSIVE study)’



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Dear Editor

We would like to express our sincere thanks to Dr Takada and co-authors for their pertinent comments about our paper [1]. They are right to remark [2] that given the various timings of approval of the COVID-19 vaccines across the world and the fact that our patients were enrolled between June 2020 and March 2021, some of them could have been vaccinated against COVID-19. In this regard, we directly inquired enrolling centres as to when cancer patients were started to be vaccinated against COVID-19 in their countries, and the starting time ranged from January (Israel and United States) to March (European countries) 2021. Considering this time, only three of the enrolled patients were COVID-19 positive later than the starting time of the vaccination in their country, and none of them had been vaccinated. Regarding the other point raised by Dr Takada and co-authors, we agree that it is relevant to distinguish the different timings of the COVID-19 positivity to catch possible differences in clinical manifestations,

treatments, and last, outcomes for the different ‘waves’. Considering that the patients of our interim analysis were reported by centres from Europe, Israel and the USA, we separated the COVID-19 diagnosis made earlier and later than September 2020. Around 40% of patients have been diagnosed with COVID-19 before August 2020, with the remaining 60% from September 2020 to March 2021. These rates could also be a representation of the worldwide increase in the availability of SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic tests. Deaths occurred in two patients diagnosed in the first period and in five diagnosed in the second period, reflecting the proportion of cases between the two periods. In conclusion, we appreciate Dr Takada’s *et al.* comments, and accordingly, we will get this information also for all the patients enrolled later than March 2021.

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Conflict of interest statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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