

Sao Paulo, May 19, 2014.

Dear editor,

Please find enclosed the edited manuscript in Word format (file name: 10140-EDITED.docx).

Title: **Robotic Surgery for Rectal Cancer: Current Immediate Clinical and Oncological Outcomes**

Authors: Sergio Eduardo Alonso Araujo, Victor Edmond Seid, and Sidney Klajner.

Name of Journal: World Journal of Gastroenterology

ESPS Manuscript: 10140

The manuscript has been improved according to the suggestions of reviewers.

REVIEWER 1:

Dear Editor, I reviewed the manuscript 10140 and I think that it is interesting, well written and adequately updated, therefore it may be published as it is.

REVIEWER 2:

I congratulate authors for their considerable effort to meet the demands of such a huge systematic review. In my opinion the present study has the following serious drawback: Every single outcome in this study is given in a mean value and a range. This can only be extracted if authors have had individual data of included patients in the studies. Moreover, authors do not provide their methodology to get these numbers. The following two suggestions are at the discretion of the authors to apply: Importance of this manuscript and the significance on clinical research has to be proved since the provided information has already been published in two meta-analysis: [Ann Surg Oncol. 2012 Jul;19(7):2095-101, Colorectal Dis. 2012

Apr;14(4):e134-56]. Authors have included 14 comparative studies, six more than the aforementioned studies and this kind of data must be analyzed in a formal statistical way in order to give strong evidence. Included case series can be analyzed by proportion meta-analysis: This function enables to calculate an overall proportion from a set of proportions.

Therefore, in full agreement to the reviewer's analysis we have conducted the following alterations in the manuscript:

1. we have decided not to include a mean value for each one of the outcomes studied in this systematic review. Therefore, all previously expressed mean values were removed from the manuscript;
2. on the other hand, despite being suggested by the diligent reviewer that a meta-analysis should be conducted, it is our opinion that significant heterogeneity in the data between study populations preclude the use of meta-analytical assessment, just as previously stated by Scarpinata & Ally (Reference 56).
3. Ultimately, although the abovementioned meta-analytical assessment was not undertaken, it is our opinion that this systematic review adds new information to the available published literature on the matter. Why? Because we have included, as detected by the reviewer, six robotic experiences not analyzed in previous similar reviews.

We hope these modifications be in accordance to the reviewer analysis and editors' decision.

Thank you in advance!

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