

September 18, 2014

Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed the edited manuscript in Word format (file name: 13254-review.doc).

Title: Use of nonselective beta-blockers in cirrhotic patients with no or small varices: A meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials

Author: Xing-Shun Qi, Yong-Xin Bao, Ming Bai, Wen-Da Xu, Jun-Na Dai, Xiao-Zhong Guo

Name of Journal: *World Journal of Gastroenterology*

ESPS Manuscript NO: 13254

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

1 Format has been updated.

2 Revision has been made according to the suggestions of the three reviewers.

We greatly appreciated the three reviewers' comments. The point-to-point response to comments were shown as follows.

Comment 1. In included studies, only 3 out of 6 were published after the year of 2000, and only one of them was published within last 3 years, which made the definition of "small varices" varied greatly among all the studies; besides, the sample size of included studies is relatively small (patients number 83-213), and only 4 of all the studies were considered high quality. All the above issues may contribute to bias and limit the validation of conclusion.

Answer: According to your comments, we have added the above-mentioned limitations in the revised manuscript (highlighted by yellow in the Discussion section).

Comment 2. Since there are four included studies targeting on patients with small varices, the comparison of the rate of developing large varices, first episode of bleeding, death and adverse events between NSBBs and placebo groups among these studies is not mentioned and should be presented and discussed, if possible.

Answer: We presented the results of meta-analyses in patients with small varices in Table 4.

Indeed, the target population are cirrhotic patients with no or small varices in the overall meta-analysis. The results of meta-analyses regarding the incidence of developing large varices, first episode of bleeding, death and adverse events between NSBBs and placebo groups were shown in Figures 2-5. Subsequently, we conducted the subgroup meta-analyses according to the presence of varices (no varices/ small varices). The results of meta-analyses were shown in Table 4 in the revised manuscript.

3 References and typesetting were corrected.

Thank you again for publishing our manuscript in the *World Journal of Gastroenterology*.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Xingshun Qi'.

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