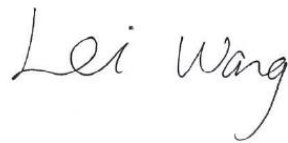


1 Institutional review board statement

The study was approved by the ethical committee of the Sixth Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yat-Sen University and met the guidelines of the local responsible governmental agency.

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

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lei Wang". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lei Wang, MD, PhD

Department of Colorectal Surgery, The Sixth Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yat-Sen University, 26Yuancun'erheng Road, Guangzhou 510655, People's Republic of China.

Tel: (86) 020-3876-7131; fax: (+86) 020-3825-4221.

E-mail: wangl9@mail.sysu.edu.cn.