

ANSWERING REVIEWERS

October 25, 2015

Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed the edited manuscript in Word format (file name: 21935-Revised manuscript.doc).

Title: Significance and prognostic value of increased serum direct bilirubin level for lymph node metastasis in Chinese rectal cancer patients

Author: Chun Gao, Long Fang, Jing-Tao Li, Hong-Chuan Zhao

Name of Journal: *World Journal of Gastroenterology*

ESPS Manuscript NO: 21935

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

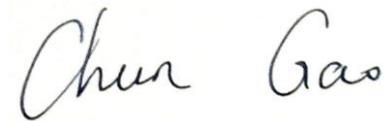
Dear Authors, Interesting work. Median values of direct bilirubin in your study were noted to be higher in Lymph node positive patients than negative patients. This is an association only. But I can see that interquartile ranges were overlapping, which raises the concern. The association may be due to induction of enzymes (conjugation mechanisms). If you would like to give prognostic significance for the quantifiable amount of direct bilirubin I would like to advice if you can ascertain specific cut off value with reportable sensitivity, specificity and accuracy, please run the stats accordingly. It is well written paper but I would advice that it can still be improved with additional graphs by using other statistical packages such as STATA. Best wishes

Answer: Dear reviewer, thank you very much for your good appreciation and suggestions.

Direct bilirubin has been used as continuous variable and categorical variable in our study. The specific cut off value was ascertained as you suggested. In addition, STATA has been tried, but no perfect graphs can be added. Thank you very much again for your good appreciation and suggestions. Best wishes.

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

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chun Gao". The letters are cursive and fluid.

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