

Name of journal: World Journal of Gastrointestinal Surgery
ESPS manuscript NO: 24831

Author Responses to Review Comments:

We are grateful to the Editor and Reviewers for the time they have taken to review our manuscript. Each and every one of their comments have been carefully considered and incorporated into the revised paper. In doing this, the paper has been considerably improved, and we now hope that it is suitable for publication.

Reviewer's code: 00535894

Reviewer's country: Poland

Please re-write the abstract to show your results

Author response: This has now been done. (Page 2)

Reviewer's code: 00502803

Reviewer's country: India

1. The title should be complete. It can be made into “ Benefits of post-operative oral protein supplementation in gastrointestinal surgery patients: A systematic review of the evidence”.

Author response: This has now been done. The full title is “Benefits of post-operative oral protein supplementation in gastrointestinal surgery patients: A systematic review of clinical trials”. (Page 1)

2. The time period for which to articles were retrieved is not clear.

Author response: This has now been included. (Page 5)

3. A PRISMA figure can be included.

Author response: This has now been included. (Page 7 and Figure 1)

4. A table on the outcome based on all studies can be included.

Author response: Table 3 does this.

Reviewer's code: 02941357

Reviewer's country: Netherlands

1. Both malnourished and normonourished patients are included. Are the results more homogenous when only trials are included in which normonourished patients undergo surgery?

Author response: We are limited in what we can analyse by the data provided in the reviewed publications. Unfortunately, not all of the those papers (limited number of papers, only 7) provide the necessary information to allow us do the analysis suggested. (We would suggest, however, that

malnourished patients may best benefit from the protein supplementation, if only for the increased calorie intake.)

2. Did the authors perform tests for heterogeneity between studies?

Author response: Same answer as above, the previous papers simply do not provide the data needed for such analysis.

3. An estimate of an overall effect would substantiate the conclusion (pooled RR or weighted mean differences). Especially since the Power of the individual studies is too small.

Author response: Same answer as above, the previous papers simply do not provide the data needed for such analysis

4. The authors mention protein intake and weight loss in the results. What is the relation with postoperative complications?

Author response: Same answer as above, the previous papers simply do not provide the data needed for such analysis

Minor points: 1. The title seems incomplete

Author response: This has now been amended. The full title is “Benefits of post-operative oral protein supplementation in gastrointestinal surgery patients: A systematic review of clinical trials”. (Page 1)

2. The results of the search may also be presented as flow-chart and please specify the reasons for exclusion of the 587 and later 35 records.

Author response: This has now been included. (Page 7 and Figure 1)

3. Discussion can be compacted.

Author response: This has now been done. (Page 2)