

Reviewer's code: 03725838

SPECIFIC COMMENTS TO AUTHORS

It has been a privilege to review this paper. I think that is a good review which introduce the development process, advantages, current issues and controversies of watch and wait strategies for patients with locally-advanced rectal cancer in detail. There are some points to review:

(1) In the Patient Selection, the applicability and limitations of watch and wait strategies are suggested to be stated for patients with locally-advanced rectal cancer who are at low or high risk of local recurrence.

We would like to thank the referee for his comment and suggestion, we have done a modification and it has been included in the text.

(2) "A wide range of neoadjuvant therapies.....with a 5 years surgery-free survival rate of 78%[92]", this is suggested to should be moved to "Standard chemoradiotherapy. Dose escalation", where it is more appropriate.

We would like to thank the referee for his suggestions. We have made the suggested modification

(3) "Other authors have investigated alternative strategies.....later confirmed in the GRECCAR and CART studies[95,96]". This part describes the advantages of local resection of cT2 tumours followed by CRT, and it is recommended to move this section to the "Outcomes and management of tumour regrowth".

We would like to thank the referee for his comment. We have moved the section

(4) Some minor remarks: "Accordingly, a recent consensus statement recommended using nodal size for follow-up assessment after neoadjuvant therapy (with nodes whose short axis diameter is < 5 mm considered benign), given the absence of other reliable criteria (16)." Reference labeling format should be written correctly.

Thank you very much. We have made the change