

Dear Editor,

This study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of Hokkaido University Hospital for Clinical Research (approval number: 018-0263), which waived the need for written informed consent due to the retrospective design. Therefore, there is no signed informed consent form.

Sincerely,

Yosuke Tsuruga, MD, PhD

Department of Gastroenterological Surgery I  
Hokkaido University Graduate School of Medicine  
North 15, West 7, Kita-ku, Sapporo 060-8638, Japan  
ytsuruga@med.hokudai.ac.jp  
Telephone: +81-11-7065927  
Fax: +81-11-7177515