

July 2, 2021

Department of Surgery

*Division of Bariatric & Minimally
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Lian-Sheng Ma, President, Baishideng Publishing Group Inc

RE:

Ms. No.: 66399

Title: Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Presentation, Management, and Outcomes of
Acute Care Surgery: A Retrospective Study of Gallbladder Disease and Acute Appendicitis

Dear Lian-Sheng Ma,

Thank you for the third review of our submitted manuscript for consideration of publication in the *World Journal of Gastrointestinal Surgery*. Attached is our revised manuscript that incorporates suggested revisions from the reviewers. We have highlighted the edits in red text in the manuscript and have summarized the changes made below. We look forward to hearing from you and thank you for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Micaela Esquivel, MD

Response to Reviewers
July 2, 21

Ms. No.: 66399

Title: Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Presentation, Management, and Outcomes of Acute Care Surgery: A Retrospective Study of Gallbladder Disease and Acute Appendicitis

Editor in Chief:

1. The title of the manuscript is too long and must be shortened to meet the requirement of the journal (Title: The title should be no more than 18 words).

We have revised the title accordingly on the manuscript document. Our Revised title is as follows: Impact of COVID-19 on the Presentation, Management, and Outcomes of Acute Care Surgery for Gallbladder Disease and Acute Appendicitis.

Science Editor:

This is an interesting manuscript reporting on how cases of cholecystitis and appendicitis had a different clinical profile during the COVID-19 pandemic due to multiple reasons. Some changes are required before the manuscript becomes ready for publication. Given below are my comments in no particular order.

1. Authors have wrongly uploaded the strobe statement PDF. They are required to upload a filled STROBE checklist, which has not been done.

Thank you for noting this. We have uploaded a completed STROBE checklist.

2. Kindly provide the table made in the docx file itself. Image/screenshot of table should not be uploaded.

We have updated the tables now in a docx file.

3. In the abstract, the results section must include N in each group, which is currently missing.

The abstract has been edited accordingly.

4. Discussion needs a significant expansion. Authors have completely missed out on incorporating the various studies that have been published in the last 6 months with regards to COVID-19 and surgery. Please discuss the COVIDSurg publications, the COVIDSurg-Week publications, the CHOLECOVID Study, and many other studies discussing appendicitis/appendectomy during COVID-19.

Thank you for these suggested studies for reference. We have expanded our discussion to include many more recent studies discussing cholecystitis and appendicitis during COVID-19.

Specifically, we incorporated a discussion of a study published in March of 2021 by Murphy et al. showing an increased incidence of acute calculous cholecystitis during COVID-19. For appendicitis, we broadened our discussion to include several papers (Orthopoulos et al., Fisher et al., Willms et al.) highlighting an increased incidence of complicated appendicitis, delays in presentation for care, and increased rates of non-operative management of appendicitis during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, we cited a study (Blecker et al.) looking at rates of non-COVID related hospitalizations during the pandemic, as a reference point for our finding that more patients with gallbladder disease were admitted to the hospital during the pandemic as compared to the year prior.

Thank you for helping us develop and update our discussion section.

5. Some graphical representation would be valuable.

Thank you for your suggestion. We had considered graphical representation, but in order to better display our results in their full context, we opted for tabulated representation. However, if the reviewers find specific data points that they think would be useful in graphical representation we would be happy to create it.

6. Authors have referenced papers that came out very early during the COVID-19 pandemic. Much has come later, and this would be useful to be referenced.

We have updated our references to include more recent studies evidencing the delays in urgent and emergency care during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, we have now incorporated a meta-analysis by Chew et al. that examined the global impact of COVID-19 on STEMI care as well as a study quantifying the number of adults in the U.S. who reported delaying urgent/emergent care. We have also included several additional current manuscripts as discussed in our response to comment #4.

7. Non-Native Speakers of English Editing Certificate: Please upload a valid Non-Native Speakers of English Editing Certificate that is certificated by a native English speaker or a professional editing company.

We have uploaded a Non-Native Speakers of English Editing Certificate. Please let us know if there are any additional concerns we can address.