

## Response

1. We believe that this is a well overdue review of the literature with immediate practical application for pathologists and clinicians involved with rectal cancer treatment. We have revised the terminology and running title to be clearer for the reader.
2. Although it may be interesting to test pTRG with mrTRG, mrTRG has already been validated as having prognostic significance and compared with pTRG in the MERCURY study. Although it is useful to know whether a tumour is operable or not pre-operatively, mrTRG gives the advantage of considering further treatment for in-operable tumours that may shrink and become operable. Furthermore when complete regression occurs there is a move towards a watch and wait policy and is gaining traction in the UK and Europe.
3. We have made the relevant changes as per reviewer 3, thank you.