

## RESPONSE TO REVIEWER 1:

We wish to express our appreciation to the Reviewers for these insightful comments, which have helped us significantly improve the paper.

Comment: This is an interesting proposal. However, very indirect evidence to support the hypothesis is provided. A preliminary study on the presence of CTCs in portal vein blood, perioperatively, in patients with colorectal cancer was previously presented at the SSAT meeting in 2009 by another group (<http://meetings.ssat.com/abstracts/09ddw/P110.cgi>). It would be interesting if the authors could provide a more detailed description of the RCT they are conducting.

### Response

In accordance with the reviewer's comment, we have added the following text to the DISCUSSION:

Furthermore, we considered a collateral study to obtain basic proof for this clinical trial. We thought that significant data would be needed to confirm the presence or absence of CTCs in the portal vein blood or peripheral blood intraoperatively or postoperatively. However, we were unable to establish this accompaniment study because of cost.

We wish to thank the Reviewers again for their valuable comments.