

September 13, 2016

Dear Drs. Damian Garcia-Olmo, MD, PhD, Doctor, Professor, Surgeon; Stephen Strom, PhD, Professor; Andrzej Tarnawski, DSc, MD, PhD, Professor

Thank you for your insightful comments regarding our recent manuscript submission. We have addressed the following concerns:

- 1) The Scientific Research Process has been completed and included with the resubmission.
- 2) Postal codes have been added to the institutions where available.
- 3) An IRB statement was included in the manuscript.
- 4) An Audio Core Tip has been provided.
- 5) Reviewer 2995208: "Although the authors evaluate SVR only in patients that complete the treatment from the 331 initially enrolled, 12 were lost during follow-up due to non-responder reasons according to figure 1. Shouldn't those patients be included in the non-SVR group? Please comment on the issue:"
 - We appreciate the suggestion made by the reviewer and in the strict sense they should be counted as non-responders. However, our analysis was restricted to the treatment completers and we have indicated as such in the abstract. We also asked a statistician to look at including the lost to follow up patients in the non-responder group and the opinion expressed was that it would not change the results. Therefore, we would like to leave it as such and acknowledge that the results are only in the treatment completers.
- 6) Reviewer 2995208: "For some variables at the tables the percentages are shown from the groups in a vertical manner. For other in a horizontal manner. For example, variable sex in table 1, the authors present the percentage of male and females from groups that achieve SVR or not (vertical) but for age groups, percentages are presented in a horizontal manner. The same variables should be used for all variables when possible (horizontal), that would make understanding of the tables easy."
 - Thank you for pointing this out. Percentages for all variables are presented in the horizontal form as noted in tables 1-5.
- 7) The COMMENTS section has been completed and included in the resubmission
- 8) The references have been checked and there are no repeated references.
- 9) A decomposable version of figure 1 has been provided as a PPT.

Kind Regards,

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