

Cover letter

Dear colleagues,

The authors thank the reviewer and editors for their relevant and helpful criticisms and comments which were all taken into account in this revised version of our paper.

The English has been checked (and certified)

New photos have been added

With many thanks for improving our paper and in the hope that you will accept it for publication in the Journal

Clémence Horaist and Philippe Marteau on behalf of coauthors

Answers to reviewers

- 1- This study did not use gold standards and this is acknowledged in the revised version page 12
- 2- More figures were added (grouped in figures 2 and 3)
- 3- We added a sentence on the potential differences between gastroenterologists and surgeons in the discussion section
- 4- We added a comment on the risk of potential differences of terminology before and after surgery page 17 (and the need to use a common language)
- 5- We agree with the interesting comment and added in the revised version page 18: "The duration of fistula persistence, sometimes dependent on its mode of onset, is probably important for the risk of evolution towards a complex form and fibrosis. Using a validated and consensual vocabulary should allow the demonstration and quantification of this."
- 6- The typos and English have been corrected
- 7- A flow chart has been added (Figure 1)