

Responses to reviewers' comments (Manuscript No 36680)

The reviewers' comments have been helpful in allowing us to revise our manuscript. We have attempted to address the questions raised by reviewers as described below.

Responses to Comments of Reviewer 01047625

Q1) Because this study was conducted in a retrospective manner, please describe more in Study Design section about how you chose cases in Group A and B (in order to achieve insignificant difference between both groups).

A1) In the "Study design" paragraph of the "Materials and Methods", we described that "70 patients received regular stent exchange at every 6 months (Group A, n=35) or every 12 months (Group B, n=35)." (page 6, line 9-11). This definition was obscure, so we added an explanatory note about how we chose cases in Group A and B as follows; "They were divided into odd (Group A) and even numbers (Group B) taken from their medical chart." (page 6, line 11-12).

Q2) Please discuss more about the limitations of this study in Discussion section, e.g., small sample size, retrospective design.

A2) In the submitted manuscript (Oct/23/2017), we had discussed about sample size as follows; "The sample size of our study is small, and further studies with a large number of patients with biliary stenting for choledocholithiasis will be required to confirm our results" (page 12, line 7-9). In order to discuss more clearly about the limitations of this study at the Discussion paragraph, we changed this sentence into the following; "In this study, a small sample size may be one of the problems to support our conclusion. In addition, our study is retrospective design, so it may be difficult to exclude any bias completely. Superior stent patency rate which are observed in this study may not hold true because of these limitations. Further studies with a large number of patients under prospective design will be required to confirm our results." (page 12, line 8-13).