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Dear Dr. Ma:

Thank you for consideration of my manuscript

This letter is my reply to the editors. I will do this in a point by point manner.

Reviewer #1: Thank you for the thoughtful criticisms. I incorporated several of the concepts that concerned you within my conclusion.

Reviewer #2: I made changes consistent with your criticism. 1) the title has been changed and “burgeoning” has been removed. 2) I corrected the poorly phrased sentence in the conclusion that did not reflect my intended conclusion. I appreciate the scrutiny. 3) The relevant table has been changed with both surgery and ESD listed as options for undifferentiated EGC’s < 20 mm.

Reviewer #3: I read your paragraph of questions and suggestions. 1) The title has been changed. Virtually all the literature that I have examined in preparation of this manuscript described ESD of EGC first followed by laparoscopy with SNNS. These EGC lesions have been predominantly evaluated by EUS prior to ESD. ESD followed by SNNS is a minimally invasive approach to EGC. Conceivably, laparoscopy can be performed initially with resection of the gastric lesion and degree of lymphadenectomy determined by SNNS. However, this would be more invasive than the strategy described previously. 2. D2 lymphadenectomy has been replaced with extended lymphadenectomy. 3. The title of figure 1 has been changed 4. The terminology relevant to EGC histology has been changed as directed. 5. A paragraph has been added to describe the significance of the sentinel node. 6. My support for ESD first then SNND is noted in the reply to the first point. 7. I used the grammar check function to make several corrections; especially in the core tip and the detailing of our SNNS experience. I also corrected the poorly worded sentence in the conclusion as noted by reviewer #2. 8. I added several sentences as a prelude to the discussion of skip metastases 9. I incorporated the suggested section headers as the reviewer designated. 10. My review of the literature reflected little relevant basic science work on SNNS. This sparse literature dealt mainly with SNNS training and feasibility of minimal invasive techniques. I did not find it worthy to add to the manuscript.

Reviewer #4 I added a paragraph relevant to resource allocation for embarking on a SNNS program.

David Friedel MD