

ANSWERING REVIEWERS



June 5, 2014

Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed the edited manuscript in Word format (file name: 9424-review.doc).

Title: Three-dimensional conformal radiotherapy combined with TACE for hepatocellular carcinoma: a meta-analysis

Author: Li-Qun Zou, Bing-Lan Zhang, Qing Chang, Fu-Ping Zhu, Yan-Yan Li, Yu-Quan Wei, Yong-Song Guan

Name of Journal: *World Journal of Gastroenterology*

ESPS Manuscript NO: 9424

The manuscript has been improved according to the suggestions of reviewers:

1 Format has been updated

2 Revision has been made according to the suggestions of the reviewer

(1) Reviewer 1: This is well written manuscript. However, there are several limitation in this paper, as the authors mentioned. Other than points the authors mentioned in discussion, the point that the papers selected for meta-analysis are all come from Asia, mostly China is a major limitation. They should mention this point in introduction (and hopefully in title) and also make discussion with the data from other (inadequate for this meta-analysis) papers from the other area in the world.

Answer: Limitation of papers selection is mentioned in the introduction section. Data from papers in other area of the word are discussed.

(2) Reviewer 2: MAJOR COMMENT This manuscript presents a meta-analysis of ten studies (two of them were randomized trials) comparing transcatheter arterial chemoembolization alone to its combination with three-dimensional conformal radiotherapy in the treatment of hepatocellular carcinoma. Although, as stated by the authors at the end of the discussion, there is a variety of drugs and techniques used and more studies will be required, this paper provides an important overview on this subject. MINOR COMMENTS Results, second paragraph: "Among the 10 studies, there were eight, nine, and eight studies that reported comparative data for QS rate..." - "QS-rate": please write out this abbreviated term. Discussion, third paragraph: "And 3D-CRT can make as a consolidation planned procedure to target residual hepatic tumor, especially for patients with portal vein thrombosis or large infiltrative hepatic tumors [2, 31, 32]." - The meaning of this sentence is unclear, please rephrase it. Table 1: For five of the studies, the Karnofsky score is given as "?70" in column 6 of table 1 – please explain.

Answer: QS is a typo error for overall survival. We have corrected it in the revised version.

The mentioned sentence in the third paragraph of discussion section is rephrased for clarification.

The typo error in column 6 of table 1 is corrected as "≥70".

(3) Reviewer 3: Manuscript is nice. I could not see figures but I think that algorithm of search (QUORUM) is included Discussion: second line two words are joined and should be separated- Also third paragraph (seongetal) should be changed to seong et al. Fourth paragraph includingleukocyte to including leukocyte.

Answer: Typo errors have been corrected.

(4) Reviewer 4: Zou et al. reported a meta-analysis for clinical outcome between TACE alone and CRT with TACE. The selection criteria for each therapy was unclear in every one of the report. In this aspect, additional therapy most likely gave favorable outcome. However, incidence of complication such as toxicity in CRT with TACE might be higher than TACE alone. The paper should present clear background of each group. The most flaw in this article is that selection of each study was unclear. How many papers did you search from Pubmed, Medline, Embase, Chinese data base? Obviously, there is nothing from the Cochrane library, isn't it. Are these written in English? Otherwise, who could confirm your analysis and believe in your data? At least, format of the meta-analysis should follow PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses). Minor: The term of tumor or tumour should be uniformed. In Fig.2 and 3, all the results shows favors in control.

Answer: We added "incidence of complication such as toxicity in CRT with TACE might be higher than TACE alone" in the present version. We collected a total of 653 trials, some are extracted from the Cochrane Library. The mentioned term is unified as "tumor".

(5) Reviewer 5: This is an interesting paper about combined therapeutic means for HCC. However, the article is lack of informations. The authors just give us the result that TACE plus 3D-CRT is better than TACE alone in the overall survival for patients with unresectable HCC. The authors should further investigate the predictive factors for patients with HCC who received TACE plus 3D-CRT.

Answer: Thank you for your interest in our article. Further investigation of predictive factors for patients with HCC who received TACE combining 3D-CRT will be conducted in our future work.

(6) Reviewer 6: This is an interesting study which was well written.

Answer: Thank you for your positive comment.

3 References and typesetting were corrected

Thank you again for publishing our manuscript in the *World Journal of Gastroenterology*.

Sincerely yours,

Yong-Song Guan

Yong-Song Guan, MD, PhD
Dept. of Oncology
West China Hospital of Sichuan University
37 Guoxuexiang Street, Chengdu
Sichuan Province, PRC
Fax: +86-28-85538359
E-mail: yongsongguan@yahoo.com