



**Sandy Hwang Fang, MD, FACS**

Assistant Professor  
Johns Hopkins Hospital  
Department of Surgery  
GI Ravitch, Colon and Rectal Surgery  
Blalock 618  
600 N. Wolfe St.  
Baltimore, MD 21287  
Phone 410-955-7323  
Fax 443-614-9866  
E-mail: [sfang7@jhmi.edu](mailto:sfang7@jhmi.edu)

September 3rd, 2015

Ref.: Manuscript No. 21035

Dear Dr. Timothy Pawlik, Dr. Jin-Xin Kong and Reviewers

We appreciate the opportunity to resubmit our manuscript to *World Journal of Gastrointestinal Surgery* entitled, “The Watch and Wait Approach for Rectal Cancer: A Review”. In our invited manuscript we describe the clinical background, outcomes and areas of uncertainty in the context of the non-operative Watch and Wait approach for rectal cancer.

Below, please find the reviewer’s comments and questions listed in *italics*, followed by our responses and revisions. Changes to the manuscript have been highlighted (in color) in through the “Track Changes” function in Microsoft Word. A second, “clean” version of the manuscript is also included.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Sandy H. Fang, M.D.

*Editor Comments:*

*The authors reviewed the “Watch and Wait” treatment algorithm of the rectal cancer, as well as the questions and uncertainty of this non-operation treatment. This is an interesting area which needs further in-depth research and more reliable data from randomized controlled trials. This review will arouse more attention towards this approach. However, the currently available data shows only 18-26% of patients may reach pathological complete response after CRT and may benefit from avoiding the radical surgery. In addition, no long term follow-up data exists. It is too early to make the call.*

Greatly appreciate your comments regarding our article. As recommended, we reviewed our entire manuscript and made minor changes to our language.

*Editor Comments:*

*The manuscript of Pozo and Fang has a complete structure and is of great interest. The topic of the review is truly innovative. The authors analyze current literature critically and let the reader get a real overview of today’s evidence. All the aspects of the wait and watch strategies are carefully analyzed. All the most important trials published in the latest years are reported and cited. The conclusion is clearly presented.*

We thank you for this feedback and thank both reviewers for taking great care in revising our manuscript.