

Answering Reviewers

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Reviewer Number ID 00926880

This is a systematic review on the outcomes of surgical resection for intermediate and advanced BCLC stages of hepatocellular carcinoma.

I have the following criticisms on this paper:-

- (1) Under Results, the authors defined BCLC stage C as “any tumour with radiologically evident and histologically proven macrovascular invasion”. In the BCLC classification this definition is not exactly true. The definition of BCLC stage C is advanced stage with portal invasion, N1, M1, PS 1-2. Macrovascular invasion accounts for a proportion of BCLC stage C. *This has been rectified in the manuscript.*
- (2) The authors divided the Results into the following headings: (A) BCLC B or C stage HCC; (B) Size of HCC; and (C) Multifocal HCC. However, under Discussion, the corresponding headings are (A) BCLC stage B HCC; (B) Multifocal HCC; (C) Large HCC; and (D) BCLC stage C HCC. It would be easier for the readers if the authors can write under Discussion using the headings in the Results. *This has been rectified in the manuscript.*
- (3) It would be good if the authors can list out the levels of evidence after reviewing the medical literature and put the level of evidence under each of the headings. *This is largely not applicable to our conduct of a systematic review and meta-analysis of this topic.*
- (4) In Figure 1 and Appendix 5, I do not understand why the bubble plots for overall survival and disease free survival can extend below 0%. Is there a phenomenon of a negative percentage in survival? *In these bubble plots, the level of the centre of the circle along the Y axis depicts the survival (which is never below zero),*

whereas the size of the circle is a pictorial representation of the sample size of the study (and does not correlate to the Y axis plotting).

- (5) In Appendix 1, what is meant by the statement “74 articles included meta-analysis?” *This has been rectified in the manuscript.*
- (6) The references are not in a uniform format, e.g. (a) reference 2, page 439-74, reference 4, pages 237-246; (b) reference 21 has 4 authors followed by et al. while the other references have only 3 authors followed by et al.; (c) reference 8 is incomplete. *This has been rectified in the manuscript.*

Minor points:

- (1) Under Material and Methods, in paragraph 2 line 2, after “..... in BCLC stage B or C in patients with adequate liver reserve (i.e. Child’s A or B status)” please add “and in good general status (PS 0-2)”. *This has been rectified in the manuscript.*
- (2) In Discussion, under BCLC HCC, line 3, change “.... has the potential cause” to “.... has the potential to cause” *This has been rectified in the manuscript.*

Reviewer Number ID 00052899

Comments To Authors: In this review, the authors systematically analyzed the surgical outcomes of liver resection for BCLC stage B and C hepatocellular carcinoma. They concluded that indications for primary surgical resection of HCC should be extended to include BCLC stage B lesions in selected patients. However, stratifying BCLC stage C lesions and potential extension surgical indications for resectable lesion until need study in future. The manuscript was well organized. But, the definition of BCLC stage C should be clarified clearly. *This has been rectified in the manuscript.* In appendix 1, the total numbers of excluded articles were inconformity. *This has been rectified in the manuscript.* Furthermore, a uniform format of references is needed. *This has been rectified in the manuscript.*