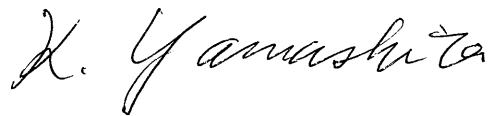


## **Informed consent statement**

This study is a retrospective investigation, so informed consent statement was not required.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "K. Yamashita". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "K" and a long, sweeping underline.

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Department of Surgery  
Kitasato University School of Medicine