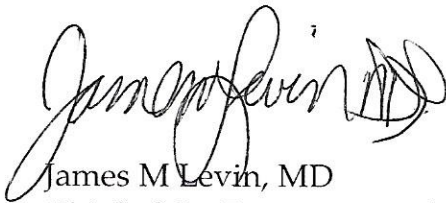


Patients were not required to give informed consent to the study because the analysis used anonymous clinical data that were obtained after each patient agreed to treatment by written consent. This study was reviewed and approved by Dean's Compliance, Access, Privacy and Security Committee.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James M. Levin, MD'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the 'MD' part being more distinct and bold than the rest of the name.

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