

Dear Dr Ma, Dear Dr Zhang,

We cannot provide the requested Institutional Review Board approval of the protocol.

For our University Department a retrospective non-interventional, non-therapeutic study is considered a spontaneous, no-profit research that does not require formal approval, because it is fully part of the institutional mission of an academic clinical unit.

This is the reason why our patients sign the authorization to use their clinical data for scientific and teaching purposes.

The protocol has been discussed and approved by full and assistant professors of the Department (Radiologist, Nutritionist, Oncologist) and has been presented by dr Chiara Maddalena as application project for the PhD programme, therefore, discussed and approved by the PhD examining board.

If these information are not enough, we regret to retire the manuscript from the World Journal of Clinical Oncology.

However, due to effort spent in the revision process, I heartly hope that the above explanations will let you consider our manuscript suitable for publication in the World Journal of Clinical Oncology.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

We remain looking forward to receiving a positive replay.

Best Regards

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