

PEER-REVIEW REPORT

Name of journal: *World Journal of Clinical Cases*

Manuscript NO: 79401

Title: Successful outcomes of unilateral vs bilateral pedicle screw fixation for lumbar interbody fusion: A meta-analysis with evidence grading

Provenance and peer review: Unsolicited Manuscript; Externally peer reviewed

Peer-review model: Single blind

Reviewer's code: 04668002

Position: Associate Editor

Academic degree: DDS, MSc, PhD

Professional title: Associate Professor, Doctor

Reviewer's Country/Territory: Sweden

Author's Country/Territory: China

Manuscript submission date: 2022-08-19

Reviewer chosen by: AI Technique

Reviewer accepted review: 2022-08-20 03:56

Reviewer performed review: 2022-08-20 04:24

Review time: 1 Hour

Scientific quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade A: Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Grade B: Very good <input type="checkbox"/> Grade C: Good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grade D: Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Grade E: Do not publish
Language quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade A: Priority publishing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grade B: Minor language polishing <input type="checkbox"/> Grade C: A great deal of language polishing <input type="checkbox"/> Grade D: Rejection
Conclusion	<input type="checkbox"/> Accept (High priority) <input type="checkbox"/> Accept (General priority) <input type="checkbox"/> Minor revision <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major revision <input type="checkbox"/> Rejection
Re-review	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

**Peer-reviewer
statements**

Peer-Review: [☒] Anonymous [☐] Onymous

Conflicts-of-Interest: [☐] Yes [☒] No

SPECIFIC COMMENTS TO AUTHORS

01 There are some sentences in the text without reference to a previous study (or studies) in order to give evidence to their statements. Without references, these statements would be mere assumptions or allegations by the authors of the manuscript. Therefore, each of the following sentences need at least one reference to back up their statement: "While there is plenty of research exploring two pedicle screw fixations, most studies were limited by their retrospective nature, lack of a comparison group, or inadequate follow-up." "Previous meta-analyses also included the limitations of not including all prospective studies and incorporating many retrospective studies, and the results may be biased." "Within aging populations, there is a significant increase in lumbar degenerative diseases (LDD), resulting in great pain and reduced quality of life in patients." "Early increase of fusion rate and relief of pain, so that patients can move early, can effectively reduce venous thrombosis, pulmonary infection, pressure sores, and other complications." "Shortening hospital stay and reducing nosocomial infections are particularly important for the recovery of elderly patients." 02 The following terms were not defined in the Materials and Methods section: "unilateral pedicle screw fixation", "bilateral pedicle screw fixation", and "lumbar interbody fusion". 03 How many reviewers searched for eligible papers, and disagreements between them were resolved? It is described that two reviewers collected the data, but not how many reviewers searched the literature. 04 There is a plethora of results (fusion rate, complications, subgroups analysis, VAS, ODI, JOA, total blood loss, operation time, length of hospital stay). Yet, the discussion is short. 05 Discussion how the limitations of your review could have affected the results

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Reviewer's code: 03471292

Position: Peer Reviewer

Academic degree: MD

Professional title: Chief Doctor

Reviewer's Country/Territory: India

Author's Country/Territory: China

Manuscript submission date: 2022-08-19

Reviewer chosen by: Dong-Mei Wang

Reviewer accepted review: 2022-10-03 09:05

Reviewer performed review: 2022-10-15 07:35

Review time: 11 Days and 22 Hours

Scientific quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade A: Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Grade B: Very good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grade C: Good <input type="checkbox"/> Grade D: Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Grade E: Do not publish
Language quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade A: Priority publishing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grade B: Minor language polishing <input type="checkbox"/> Grade C: A great deal of language polishing <input type="checkbox"/> Grade D: Rejection
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Re-review	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Peer-reviewer statements	Peer-Review: [<input type="checkbox"/>] Anonymous [<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y] Onymous Conflicts-of-Interest: [<input type="checkbox"/>] Yes [<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y] No
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SPECIFIC COMMENTS TO AUTHORS

Following are my review comments on the manuscript.

1. There has been other similar studies published in literature. Even though the authors have mentioned "Previous meta-analyses also included the limitations of not including all prospective studies and incorporating many retrospective studies, and the results may be biased. We retrieved all the literature about unilateral and bilateral pedicle screw fixation after lumbar fusion in recent years and included the latest randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and prospective cohort studies." the reviewer feels that studies including prospective ones have been published. Authors could discuss in discussion how this study adds further value to existing literature.
2. One of the two primary outcome measures was "safety". Authors have mentioned that they assessed safety through "complications such as screw loosening, cage migration, infection, psoas, and neural symptoms". However in results under the heading of "complications" authors have mentioned "Thirteen studies assessed the fusion rate of 918 patients followed up for at least 12 months. There was no significant difference between the two internal fixation methods (RR=1.140, 95%CI [0.792, 1.640], P=0.481, Fig. 4 b)." This is for fusion rate and not complication. Authors have not mentioned any results pertaining to safety as complications. Authors may do needful.
3. One of the aims of the study was to compare "Safety". However, authors have not discussed this appropriately in discussions and conclusion also has no mention in this regard.
4. Inclusion and exclusion criterias could be more clearly stated in order to clarify how this study is better than previous such studies.
5. 12 months follow up is a short interval to comment on fusion rates.
6. Out of 15 studies included, 4 studies were about mis tlf. This creates heterogeneity as it could lead to bias in the secondary



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outcomes of study particularly the blood loss and hospital stay. 7. The risk of selection and reporting bias was present in almost all the 15 studies. Authors may discuss if this affected the final result. 8. The two opening statements of sub heading FUSION RATE and COMPLICATION need explanation for discrepancy in number of patients and number of studies. At two places the following is mentioned. “Eleven studies assessed the fusion rate of 708 patients followed up for at least 12 months.” & Thirteen studies assessed the fusion rate of 918 patients followed up for at least 12 months.

RE-REVIEW REPORT OF REVISED MANUSCRIPT

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Reviewer's Country/Territory: Sweden

Author's Country/Territory: China

Manuscript submission date: 2022-08-19

Reviewer chosen by: Han Zhang

Reviewer accepted review: 2022-11-18 13:26

Reviewer performed review: 2022-11-18 13:32

Review time: 1 Hour

Scientific quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade A: Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Grade B: Very good <input type="checkbox"/> Grade C: Good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grade D: Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Grade E: Do not publish
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Peer-reviewer	Peer-Review: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anonymous <input type="checkbox"/> Onymous



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statements

Conflicts-of-Interest: [] Yes [Y] No

SPECIFIC COMMENTS TO AUTHORS

The manuscript now seems to be suitable for publication.