

December 2, 2013

Dear Editor,
please find enclosed the edited manuscript in Word format (file name: 5954 - review.doc).

Title: Colorectal cancer and lymph nodes: the obsession with the number 12.

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Name of Journal: *World Journal of Gastroenterology*

ESPS manuscript N°: 5954

The manuscript has been improved according to the suggestions of the reviewers:

- I. Format has been updated
- II. Revision has been made according to the suggestions of the reviewer:

Reviewer 1 (n° 00058210)

1. the paper is an "invited" review; we have added new data from literature's studies both in the text (highlighted in yellow) and in the tables; more specifically about:
 - a. LNs excision and survival (text);
 - b. number of LNs necessary for a correct staging (table 1);
 - c. surgeon's experience (table 3 and text);
 - d. laparoscopic and open technique (table 4 and text);
 - e. pathologists and surgeons (text);
 - f. obesity (text);
 - g. tumor's size (text);
 - h. neoadjuvant radiochemotherapy (text).
2. We have subdivided the paper as in your "Format for review" and in order to make it easier to read we have introduced the "table 2". I renamed chapter 4 in "Can the "lymph node ratio" be useful in the event of inadequate sampling?"
3. In order to make it easier to read, we have
 - a. eliminated a few sentences ("we are somewhat surprised ..." or "all seems be solved ..." or "it is worth considering ..." and in some cases "magic number" and "real world") ;
 - b. introduced more outcomes of studies (see above);
 - c. introduced 4 tables. I tried to do a fifth table about "lymphadenectomy and survival", but it was impossible because of too different methodologies of the various studies in

the literature. Obviously I deleted in the text that I have described in the table.

Reviewer 2 (n° 00069398)

About the reviewer's suggestion, in the subchapter "disease-related", we added a paragraph about the total number of LNs examined after colectomy for an endoscopically removed malignant polyp.

III.

- a. I changed the term "Lymph nodes" with the acronym "LNs";
- b. I modified the bibliography in relation to the new text;
- c. I reformatted all the reference numbers (superscript with square brackets without blank space between reference number and the before word);
- d. "references" are 119 and many of these in the last four years (2009-2012); I do not understand what it means "*avoid inappropriate reference citations such as linking two numbers with a hyphen when the difference between them is greater than 5*" as it is written in "*The Revision Policies of BPG for Review*"; in fact, to confirm some essential data (e.g.: the metastatic involvement of the LNs and staging) we believe it is useful to report more than 5 references consecutively;

IV. the paper has yet been revised by dr. Justin Rizzo (native English speaker).

V. References and typesetting were corrected.

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

Sincerely yours

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