

Date: 22/05/2018

To,
The Chief Editor,
World Journal of Gastrointestinal Oncology

Robotic total meso-rectal excision for rectal cancer: a systematic review following the publication of the ROLARR trial

Manuscript ID: 39412

Dear Sir,

Following changes were inserted in the manuscript as suggested by the reviewers.

REVIEWER 1:

- The introduction section has been shortened and those comments have been added in the discussion section of the manuscript.
- Aims of the study have also been revised and elaborated.
- As this is an invited manuscript and there were no limits in number of words and figures. Therefore, authors would like to continue with same number of figures. Deleting figures will limit the true message and representable content of the manuscript.
- Results section has been expanded as per advice of the reviewer one.
- The quality of the legends has been improved.
- As per Cochrane Collaboration protocol, in any systematic review or meta-analysis, exclusion of studies due to the time of publication may seriously skew the results of the review and introduce a serious selection bias. Because there is only one RCT is available on current subject, therefore, maximum number of N-RCTs without any genuine reason of exclusion should be analysed and reported. I am afraid, authors decided not to remove any study from the analysis based upon the time of publication to avoid biased conclusions and outcome of the current meta-analysis. We are really sorry about this decision and hope reviewer will kindly accept our reason of not excluding older studies.

REVIEWER 2:

- Thanks very much for accepting our article for publication.

EDITOR'S SUGGESTIONS:

- Authors contribution has been added on the title page.
- Conflict of interest statement is submitted
- Biostatistics statement is submitted
- Data sharing statement is not applicable
- Abstract has been revised structured as per suggestions
- Audio core tip is submitted
- Article highlights has been added in the manuscript
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Sincerely,

Mr M Shafique Sajid on behalf of all authors.