

1. Reviewer -1

SPECIFIC COMMENTS TO AUTHORS

This is an interesting study about the long-term oncologic outcome of ypN0 rectal cancer identified using the modified fat clearance or conventional fixation method following 30 Gy/10f nRT. The study is well designed and the results are very interesting. The sample size is very big, and inclusion criteria is clear. The title seems too long, please shorten it. References list is updated, however, I suggest the authors can delete the old ones (Published before or around 2000). Some minor language polishing should be revised.

Answers: All changes have been made, title has been revised, and the references have been shortened as suggested.

2. Reviewer-2

This study is very interesting. The manuscript is well written. I have some minor comments. 1 Some references are missing, please check and add it. Such as, the last paragraph of the introduction "We previously report the LN distribution and pattern of metastases in the mesorectum using the modified fat clearing technique". I can't find the references. 2 The sample size is big, the criteria of inclusion and exclusion are very clear and in detail. 3 Figures are very good, especially the figure 1 and figure 2. However, the figure 3 and figure 4 can be written as Figure 3A and 3B. 4 The discussion is good, however, the references are tediously long. I suggest to shorten the reference list. 5 There are some minor language polishing, which should be revised.

Answers: The missing reference has been added, and figure 3 and 4 have been combined as 3A and 3B. The references have been shortened as instructed. Language has been re-edited.