

## Cover letter

Dear Editors and Reviewers,

Enclosed is a revision of our paper, entitled “**Single-stage Anterior Debridement and Reconstruction with Tantalum Mesh Cage for Complicated Infectious Spondylitis**” in which the questions and concerns raised by the Editors and Reviewers have been addressed. The changes are highlighted with "Track Changes" tool in the revised manuscript. The responses to the reviewers' comments are listed in the following table with a point-by-point description of the changes made.

<i>Reviewer's Comment</i>	<i>Author's Response</i>	<i>Altered text of the manuscript</i>
<b><u>Reviewer 1# C1:</u></b> I recommend the authors should make a thoroughly literature review concerning the surgical method, the interval from the start of antibiotics to the surgery, neurological deficits before and after operation, evidence of bone fusion, infectious	In this retrospective study, we have made a literature review concerning complicated infectious spondylitis , the treatment choice, and the clinical outcomes in the Introduction and Discussion section of the manuscript. Thank you for your suggestions.	No changes was made in the revised manuscript.

<p>pathogen (TB and non-TB), and long-term neurological outcome.</p>		
<p><b><u>Reviewer 1# C2:</u></b></p> <p>Based on the report by these authors, nearly 19/20 (95%) cases achieved excellent outcome without complication (only one case with wound infection), which seems better than the previous reports. The authors should address this point in the discussion section</p>	<p>As you suggested, we have addressed this point in the Discussion section of the revised manuscript.</p>	<p><i>(page 14, line 10-14)</i></p> <p>In the current study, <b>nineteen out of twenty (95%) patients achieved excellent outcome without complication, which was better than the previous reports.</b></p> <p>One patient suffering from refractory infection with anterior wound dehiscence was successfully treated with additional anterior debridement and antibiotic bead deposition.</p>
<p><b><u>Reviewer 2# :</u></b></p> <p>Dear author, This is a good study which evaluates clinical and radiological results of</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments.</p>	<p>No changes was made in the revised manuscript.</p>

<p>patients with complicated infectious spondylitis treated with single-stage anterior debridement and reconstruction using tantalum mesh cage followed by immediate instrumentation. From my point of view, this paper has a potential to be accepted.</p>		
<p><b><u>Reviewer 3# C1:</u></b> Please state the statistical method more detailed</p>	<p>As you suggested, we have stated more detailed information concerning the statistical method in the revised manuscript. Thank you for your expert comment.</p>	<p><i>(page 9, line 8-10)</i> <b>Data of outcome assessment are presented as mean values with standard deviations or median values with interquartile ranges.</b></p>
<p><b><u>Reviewer 3# C2:</u></b> Please cite the two literatures: Wang F, Zhao B*, Wang N*. Significance of sacroiliac</p>	<p>As you suggested, we have cited the two literatures in the Introduction section of the revised manuscript. Thank you very much.</p>	<p>1. <b>Wang F</b>, Yan CG, Xiang HY, Xing T, Wang NS. The significance of platelet activation in</p>

<p>joint arocele in diagnosis of ankylosing spondylitis. J Shanghai Jiaotong University (Sci). 2011, 16(5):636-640. Wang F*, Yan CG, Xiang HY, Xing T, Wang NS*. The significance of platelet activation in ankylosing spondylitis. Clin Rheumatol. 2008, 27(6):767-769.</p>		<p>ankylosing spondylitis. <a href="#">Clin Rheumatol</a> 2008; <b>27</b>:767-769 [PMID: 18247078 DOI: 10.1007/s10067-008- 0847-7] 2. <b>Wang F</b>, Zhao B, Wang N. Significance of sacroiliac joint arocele in diagnosis of ankylosing spondylitis. <i>J Shanghai Jiaotong University (Sci)</i> 2011; <b>16</b>:636-640 [DOI: 10.1007/s12204-011- 1201-9]</p>
<p><b><u>Reviewer 3# C3:</u></b> Some grammar errors should be corrected.</p>	<p>As your comments, we have corrected grammar errors in the revised manucrypt. Thank you.</p>	<p>All grammar errors have been corrected in the revised manuscript.</p>

The comments from the Editor and Reviewers are very helpful to our work and also improve the readability of our revised manuscript. We deeply appreciate your

expert and valuable comments. We hope that our manuscript is now acceptable for publication in the *World Journal of Orthopedics*.

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