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19<sup>th</sup> December 2014

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General Surgery

Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed the edited manuscript in Word format (file name: 15700-review.doc).

**Title: Feasibility and Oncological Outcomes of Laparoscopic Rectal Resection following Neo-adjuvant Chemo-radiotherapy: A Systematic Review**

**Authors: Pawan Kumar DHARUVA RAO, Manojkumar S NAIR, Puthucode N HARAY**

**Name of Journal:** *World Journal of Surgical Procedures*

**ESPS Manuscript NO:** 15700

We thank the reviewers for a positive review and the manuscript has been improved according to the suggestions of reviewers.

1 Format has been updated

2 Revision has been made according to the suggestions of the reviewers and marked in the revised manuscript as color coded highlights as below:

**Reviewer Comments**

**Reviewer 1 (Reviewer Number 00042960):**

This review addresses a very interesting and timely clinical issue. Although the EBM Literature is limited and only one RCT could be included, the presented data are of clinical relevance. **I have no specific comments.**

**Reviewer 2 (Reviewer Number 02456377):**

The authors provide us a systematic review about the potential feasibility and oncological outcomes following Laparoscopic total mesorectal excision (LTME) in patients who have received Neo-adjuvant long course chemo-radiotherapy (LCRT). The manuscript is well organized and is written in a fluent style. There are still some suggestions that remain to be considered.

1. In Conclusion section, the authors mentioned that the long term oncological outcomes of LTME after LCRT needed to further investigation. The authors should briefly discuss how to do further investigation and predict the prospect

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of possible results. – See penultimate paragraph in Discussion and modified conclusion – cannot specifically predict results of future study.

2. In Discussion section, the authors mentioned that the studies were heterogeneous. The authors should analyze the potential reasons that resulted in the heterogeneous results. – See revised paragraph in results

3. In Page 8, Line 6, "The patient characteristics of all the studies is shown ..." should be "...are shown...". In Page 8, Line 20, "... (0-4% Vs 0-8.3% respectively)." should be "...vs...". In Page 10, Line 19, "The Surrogate markers of oncological outcome ..." should be "...surrogate...". – revised as suggested

Reviewer 3 (Reviewer Number 00181214):

This is a clear, well written and documented systematic review, and I suggest to accept and publish the article after minor revisions. Specifically:

1. Introduction: Abdomino-perineal resections has the acronym APR, but in the Results and Tables has been referred as APER, please revise. – revised throughout the manuscript

2. Methods: study selection paragraph. Please refer to "authors" rather than "reviewer" to researchers that performed selection of papers. – revised as suggested

3. Results: first paragraph. According to Figure 1, after selecting 113 articles, 81 were excluded because they did not meet the criteria and 6 articles because were referred as guidelines. In line with this 26 articles (not 27) met the inclusion criteria; please revise in the text. – revised as suggested

4. Results and Tables (Table 4 and Table 7). Consider a pooled analysis and a Chi-square test comparing the overall rate of M/F ratio and APER (laparoscopic vs open; Table 4) and comparing post-operative complications in the two groups. – Not performed as studies were heterogeneous making pooled analysis inappropriate without access to primary data

5. Please improve the discussion section on the basis of these new finding, and elucidating whether the studies included in this review documented any difference of statistical values comparing the two approaches. – No new findings as pooled analysis inappropriate

3 References and typesetting were reviewed and found correct.

Thank you again for publishing our manuscript in the *World Journal of Surgical Procedures*

Yours Sincerely



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