Reviewer's report

Title: Surgery for fistula in ano in a specialist colorectal unit: a critical appraisal

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Reviewer: gennaro rosa

Reviewer's report:

This article is a case report, well detailed but some difficulty of interpretation and some imprecision of terms and ratios reported are in the text.

An author, Shulka, quoted in discussion, is not reported in the references.

When I reviewed single paragraphs of the article I noted:

ABSTRACT- FIRST PARAGRAPH:
The follow-up range is acceptable, even if 3.8 months reported as the lowest is too short to evaluate results of fistula-in-ano operation.

INTRODUCTION-SECOND PARAGRAPH:
The cutting seton procedure is well explained, but the surgical cutting after loose seton is not described.

PATIENTS AND METHODS-THIRD PARAGRAPH:
Authors write that their cases were classified according to Parks' classification, but in this one submucosal/superficial fistulae are not included. Other classification, based on Parks' ideas account them.

RESULTS-FOURTH PARAGRAPH:
Comorbidities have been treated at the same time of the fistula operation or not? Loose seton was the only treatment on 94 patents (40.7%) We know that loose seton alone does not heal anal fistulas.

Authors must clarify better this detail in connection with the ratio of the cured patients reported.

Recurrence report, even if well detailed, is scattered and not on the whole understandable; it would be better to modulate again it and make a synthesis.

Results explanation displays the surgical approach difficulties in many cases, but is too detailed and forces the comprehension's reader.

DISCUSSION- FIFTH PARAGRAPH:
Shulka et al. quoted as a reference with n.21 in the article is not included in the references paragraph. 26 fistulae with Crohn disease on the whole 231 are not 24.3% but 11.25%.

CONCLUSION:
The article is acceptable with MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS, as pointed out
from the paragraphs review.
My advice on publication is positive.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have not competing interests.