Reviewer’s report

Title: Efficacy of transoral fundoplication for treatment of chronic gastroesophageal reflux disease incompletely controlled with high-dose proton-pump inhibitors therapy: a randomized, multicenter, open label, crossover study

Version: 1 Date: 16 September 2014

Reviewer: Beat Peter Müller-Stich

Reviewer’s report:

The authors present a nice manuscript on a randomized controlled comparison of transoral fundoplication (TF) to high dose proton pump inhibitor therapy (PPI). Additionally, a cross over design allows for findings on the durability of TF over a period of 12 months. Unfortunately, the follow-up period is short and any form of blinding seems to be missing. Therefore, the authors have to deal with observer bias and placebo effect. Additionally, the authors missed to compare TF to laparoscopic fundoplication, which theirselves described as the gold standard. This is a pity because at least patient blinding for six months would have been easy by a shame endoscopy and observer bias could have been eliminated by assessor blinding.

I would therefore suggest the following revision:

Major compulsory revisions

1. A paragraph on blinding should be added in the method section; the authors should state if they had applied any form of blinding, and if not why not.

2. The conclusions in the discussion section should be weakened against the background of a potential observer bias and placebo effect. They should focus the interpretation of their results on the objective findings like pH-metry results and endoscopic findings more than on symptomatic improvement. And they should state that any symptomatic improvement might be the result of a placebo effect.

3. Any comparison with laparoscopic fundoplication e.g. in terms of side-effects should be omitted in the discussion section because no surgical control group was used in this study. Therefore, the authors cannot conclude that TF is a better alternative to laparoscopic fundoplication in terms of post-fundoplication symptoms as long as they have not compared the two methods.

Minor essential revisions

4. For the EsophyX device the company should be mentioned (in parentheses) on page 4

5. P-values should be added in Table 2
6. In the heading of Table 3 there is a typing error; an 'I' is missing in the first parentheses (PPIs instead of PPs).

7. Abbreviations should be explained separately in every Table and Figure.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'