Reviewer's report

Title: Impact of hiatal hernia on histological pattern of non-erosive reflux disease

Version: 1 Date: 14 September 2004

Reviewer: Ronnie Fass

Reviewer's report:

General

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
I am not clear about the meaning of the histological findings that the authors related to patients with non-erosive reflux disease and hiatal hernia. The authors claim that these are more severe histopathological findings, but provided very little information to support the claim. Additionally, the authors did not demonstrate that the presence of these histological findings in patients with non-erosive reflux disease is associated, for example, with more severe presentation of NERD. In fact, the authors provided no insight into the meaning of their findings.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
1. On the background: Reference #1 is 12 years old and there are other more updated references.
2. Background, Paragraph 3: Change the word “elusive” to “unknown”.
3. Methods: Is there a reason why the authors elected to biopsy the esophagus 3 cm above the lower esophageal sphincter and not somewhere else?
4. Results: The results are presented with almost no p values. I am not clear if the superiority of one over the other is numerically or statistically determined.
5. “P=2,61E-6” is unclear.
6. The last paragraph under histological finding that includes information about “basal zone hyperplasia and loss of glycogen accompanied hiatal hernia in all cases …” has unclear meaning. The authors should further elaborate on the meaning of seeing certain histological findings in patients with hiatal hernia as compared with those without hiatal hernia.
7. Discussion, first paragraph: citation #1 is used even though the statement that is made has nothing to do with this citation.
8. Discussion, last paragraph: The explanation is very confusing and the authors should make an effort to clarify it.
9. Table 1: Add percentages to the numbers.
10. Figure 1: Instead of the number of patients, change to percentages.
11. Figure 3: Overall, the number of subjects is small and p values are missing.
12. Figure 4: P values are missing and different colors are needed to separate the different histopathological findings.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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

Statistical review: Yes