Author's response to reviews

Title: Treatment of malignant gastric outlet obstruction with stents: A systematic evaluation of the reported variables for clinical outcome

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Version: 4 Date: 18 March 2009

Author's response to reviews: see over
Cover letter

Response to reviews

MS: 2181460082354941

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the positive evaluation of our paper: “Treatment of malignant gastric outlet obstructions with stents” which has been revised in accordance with the suggestions by the referees. A detailed response to the referees is given below.

Enclosed you will find the revised manuscript (including tables)

Respectfully,

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Response to the referees

Referee 1 (Iruru Maetani)

Minor Essential Revisions

1. In the method section the text has been changed to “information on stent patency”, since survival is not mentioned in the result section (confer abstract and page 6).

2. As suggested by the referee, Ref #26 and ref#41 in the original manuscript did presumably include the same patients. The most recent publication (#41)(#41 in revised manuscript) is now included as a prospective study in the review. The other study (#26)(#48 in revised manuscript) is used as a reference for the Song scoring system.

3. The present review did not include stent placement for esophagojejunostomy after total gastrectomy and, according to the referee’s suggestion, these studies are no longer included in the review.

4. The correct number of prospective studies is now 20 after exclusion of study #26. The studies are listed in Table 2 and correspond with the text in the Results section.

5. In accordance with the suggestion by the referee, the title has been revised to “Treatment of malignant gastric outlet obstruction with stents”.

Discretionary revisions

1. A table listing the retrospective studies is now included in the paper (Table 3).

2. As suggested by the referee, a sentence with information on the relevant publication by Maetani et al is now included in the discussion. (confer abstract and page 9).
Referee 2 (Greger Lindberg)

Major compulsory revisions

Prior to the literature search, it was decided that studies including less than 15 patients should not be included. This number was chosen to reduce the uncertainty of smaller studies. Unfortunately this led to the exclusion of the only randomized study to that date, but according to our opinion, the search criteria can not be changed after performing the search. The exclusion of the only randomized study is, however, discussed to inform the reader of its presence.

Minor Compulsory Revisions

According to the referee’s suggestion, a short explanation of the Karnofsky performance scale has been added in a relevant part of the Results section (confer abstract and page 7).

Referee 3 (Todd Baron)

Minor essential revision

1. The study by Maetani et al was published after we conducted our literature search and it was therefore not included in the analyses of the review. The interesting findings of this study is, however discussed in the revised manuscript and a reference to this study is now included (confer abstract and page 7).