Reviewer's report

Title: A Prospective Cohort Study of Postoperative Complications in the Management of Perforated Peptic Ulcer

Version: 1 Date: 7 April 2006

Reviewer: Hung Lau

Reviewer's report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Regarding the analysis, the censored event is the development of a complication. However, this single censored event, in fact, comprised a heterogeneous groups of complications. This jeopardized the validity and applicability of the results. Besides, it is difficult to determine the commencement time of the censored event. Frequently, complication started soon after operation.

Instead of focusing on the rate of developing complication or risk of developing no. of complications, most readers are more concerned about complications requiring surgical intervention and ultimate outcomes of the patients. Authors should point the clinical relevance or importance of evaluating the rate of developing complications and the no. of complications. Types & no. of surgical intervention, as well as causes of death should be given.

Did the rate of developing complication and higher no. of complications influence the mortality?

Please elaborate the clinical impact of the author's findings.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

What was the blood group selected to be a predictor?

Please define abdominal distension. Any objective criteria? 39% of patients had abd. distension appeared unusual.

Please delete 2nd paragraph on p.9. It appeared irrelevant to the paper.

What is 'tension suture'?

In introduction of abstract, objective was not clearly stated.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Suggest to tabulate features on admission and medical conditions - 1st paragraph of Results.

Were the 4 subjects without repair really suffering from PPU?

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the
major compulsory revisions

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes