Reviewer's report

Title: Comparison of Inpatient vs. Outpatient Anterior Cervical Discectomy and Fusion: A Retrospective Case Series

Version: 1 Date: 10 December 2008

Reviewer: Kostas Fountas

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Major Compulsory Revisions
1. Were the included patients consecutive cases or selected? And if so, what were the authors' selection criteria?
2. What percentage of their patients underwent de novo ACDF+P and what percentage revision? Please indicate the respective percentages for inpatients and outpatients too.
3. What kind of plate the authors used in their cohort?
4. Did the authors routinely obtain early postoperative X-rays in the outpatient or the inpatient group?
5. Were there any patients that although had been initially characterized as "outpatient" to become postoperatively "inpatient"? If yes, what was the reason?
6. The reported postoperative dysphagia in the current series was extremely low for patients undergoing plating. Could the authors identify any reasons for that very low incidence of postoperative dysphagia?
7. The authors need to address in their manuscript the issue of plating in patients undergoing single-level ACDF. Do they routinely employ plating in all their single-level cases? If not, it would be helpful to provide some info regarding the percentage of their single-level cases that undergo plating.
8. The authors found that all their myelopathic patients had either good or excellent outcome in an average of approximately two months postoperatively. How severe was the preoperative myelopathy of their patients?
9. What was the cut-off age limit for considering somebody as a candidate for undergoing outpatient ACDF+P in their practice?
10. The authors identified in their manuscript that older age and the presence of comorbidity may be excluding factors for outpatient ACDF+P. Did they consider any other factors such as previous neck surgery, duration of surgery, operative blood loss as additional excluding factors?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.