Reviewer's report

Title: Evaluation of National Trends in the Utilization of Partial Nephrectomy in Relation to the Publication of the American Urological Association Guidelines for the Management of Clinical T1 Renal Masses

Version: 2 Date: 26 September 2014

Reviewer: Pranav Sharma

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. One big statistical discrepancy in this study is the age group difference before and after the AUA guidelines. The authors have broken this into age<60 and age>60 in Table 1 showing no difference between the two groups (p=0.3), but why not use age as a continuous variable to determines differences between the two groups? Are more patients being treated with RN after the guidelines just because we are seeing more older patients with small renal masses in recent years? The AUA guidelines do suggest RN in older patients that may not benefit from PN due to limited life expectancy. Even the authors themselves point out that older patients are more likely to be treated with RN in Table 2. I would suggest to the authors to clarify this point as a 61 year old patient with a small renal mass is dramatically different than a 75 or 80 year old patient with a small renal mass with different management strategies and treatment goals. With an aging population in the US, we may be seeing older patients with incidentally discovered small renal masses than are more amenable to treatment with RN. Publication of new guidelines would not have an impact on this age migration.

Discretionary Revisions:

1. I would suggest to the authors to consider looking at a longer time period after publication of the AUA guidelines of the utilization of partial nephrectomy. Usually, two years is a very short time to show the adoption of new guidelines, especially in community-based or rural practices.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests