Reviewer's report

Title: Laparoscopic nephrectomy for Giant staghorn calculus with non-functioning kidneys. Is associated unsuspected urothelial carcinoma responsible for conversion?

Version: 1 Date: 10 August 2005

Reviewer: Serdar Deger

Reviewer's report:

General
Authors addressing an interesting and good point of so called simple nephrectomies, which are not easy to perform.

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

The authors mentioning that surgeons should keep in mind that some non-functioning kidneys can hide malignant disease and recommending a operative strategy to perform a dissection outside of the gerota fascia. It should also be addressed that these kidneys should be removed via laparoscopic bag when the procedure is completed laparoscopically. These two cases are not selectively converted because of known malignancies. In the first case there was an incidently injury of renal pelvis and tumour material came out and the second case was converted due to problems of laparoscopic dissection. So in specially second case the surgeon did not know exactly that he is dealing with malignant disease when he converted. The question in the title is placed well and is not discussed in conclusions. It is recommendable to change the title. This paper is still an interesting paper because it is addressing the possibility of a malignant disease in non-functioning kidneys, which is also has to be considered in patients with chronic renal failure and recommending surgical modifications. The operation can be done laparoscopically properly regarding oncological rules and there is still the possibility for conversion if the laparoscopic dissection is not possible.

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

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: Acceptable

Statistical review: No