Author's response to reviews

Title: Obliteration of radical cavities with autogenous cortical bone; long-term results

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Version: 4 Date: 23 June 2008

Author's response to reviews:

Dear Dr Lolu da-Silva,

Attached please find our manuscript “Obliteration of radical cavities with autogenous cortical bone; long-term results” by authors AM Abdel-Rahman, M Pietola, TJ Kinnari, H Ramsay, J Jero and AA Aarnisalo. We have answered to all the questions and comments of the reviewers (2nd revision). Please see the text below containing our revisions. We hope that our manuscript will be accepted for publication.

Looking forward to hearing you soon,

Sincerely yours,

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Answers to the Reviewer’s reports
Reviewer: Patrick J Dawes
Version: 3 Date: 6 June 2008
Reviewer’s report:

Question 1 - Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?
The question answered by the authors is:
What is the long term outcome following canal wall down mastoidectomy with epitympanic and mastoid obliteration: consideration of cavity condition and hearing.
The question posed is:
We have studied the durability of autogenous obliteration material and the musculoperiosteal flap in the long term.

I would prefer to read:
We have studied the long term condition of ears that underwent canal wall down mastoidectomy with mastoid and epitympanic obliteration using autogenous bone chips and a musculoperiosteal flap

This has been revised as suggested by the reviewer

Question 3 – Are the data sound?
Yes for the patients assessed.

Note
Results, para 2, line 4 and 5: says we evaluated all the CDW operations etc. This is potentially misleading as the authors have examined 70 out of 133 procedures done.
This sentence should read…Of the patients we evaluated between 1986 and 1991 all were aimed to be single stage surgeries.
Note: almost half the patients were not included. There is a lot of missing data and this may have altered the outcome. It is necessary to state that there are limitations because of this.

This has been revised as suggested by the reviewer.
70 out of 133 patients actually participated. This fact is clearly said in the material and methods, results and discussion part. The limitations caused by the material are obvious and are discussed in the discussion part.

Question 5 - Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequate supported by the data?
On page 9, para 3, line 3:…..However, some resorption of bone does occur.
This sentence is not supported by the data. Tympanometry and examination of the cavity was performed once, 18 years after the surgery. There is no prior tympanometry or examination reported so the authors cannot say that their cavities enlarged, albeit on average only a little bit. What they can say is that most of the cavities were small and predominantly trouble free.

This has been revised as suggested by the reviewer.

Reviewer: John L Dornhoffer
Reviewer’s report:

I believe the authors have satisfied the reviewers suggestions for revision and this manuscript is ready for publication.

No revisions required.