Reviewer's report

Title: Reimbursement for reconstruction by tissue transfer - A European comparison

Version: 2 Date: 14 March 2014

Reviewer: Andrea Messori

Reviewer's report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions

1. This study is poor on the following points:
   a) description of the primary data on which the subsequent analyses were based: both in the abstract and in the full text, the Methods section does not indicate the nature and the source of the data that were analyzed.

   b) In particular, the Methods section of the abstract is completely uninformative on this point (which data? from which institutions? from real patients or from expert opinion? in the case of patients, how many patients? in the case of experts, how many experts and from which countries?).

   c) Also the Methods section of the full text is unclear on most of these aspects. Presumably, the research procedure adopted for each country included the analysis of 20 flaps, but whether these 20 cases per country were real cases from consecutive series collected locally (but... where exactly?) or simulations “imagined” by the local expert remains unexplained.

   d) Unfortunately, the rest of the paper is negatively affected by the lack of details on the source of the information included in these analyses. Of course, some real data somewhere are likely to be the source of this information, but all details on this point regrettably are lacking.

2. Results section: the reader realizes that 1,920 patients were simulated. Again, no details are provided on how these simulations were carried out. As pointed out above, the problem of this paper is with the description of the Methods. Without an adequate description in the Methods on how these simulations were performed, realizing in the Results that 1,920 simulated patients were analyzes increases the difficulty of the reader in understanding what actually the authors have done in this analysis.

3. If one accepts that the nature and the origin of these simulated patients remains obscure, the analysis of the subsequent results is presented much better and most of the comments are appropriate.

4. There is however one further problem with the statistical analysis. Presenting only the p-values with no other information on means and/or standard deviations and/or confidence intervals makes little sense.
5. Curiously enough, the threshold for statistical significance is set at \( p=0.001 \), but no explanation is given on the reason why this threshold was adopted as opposed to the common threshold at \( p=0.05 \).

- Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)

5. Please indicate the SD or the SEM in the three figures and in the three tables.

Minor Essential Revisions

None

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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