Reviewer's report

Title: Perioperative management in distal pancreatectomy: Results of a survey in 23 European centres and a review of literature.

Version: 2 Date: 7 January 2009

Reviewer: Stefan Sauerland

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting analysis comparing current practice in pancreatic surgery with evidence-based standards. For a clinical reader, both ways of reasoning are interesting: How do the experts perform surgery? Is this standard based on high-quality trials?

I have only a few minor comments:

1. Although the authors mention the association between caseload and outcome in the introduction, they fail to characterize their 23 centres. Were all these centres university hospitals operating on large number of patients per year?

2. Are there any explanatory variables which are responsible for the differences in perioperative care? For example, was the use of octreotide or bowel preparation dependent on the caseload or the geographic localization of a centre?

3. As this article describes the method of a consensus-assisted study protocol development, it would be fair to cite the German pioneer in this field: Lorenz W, Weitzerl F, Sitter H: Consensus-assisted development of a study protocol on sepsis: an important difference from previous randomised trials. Theor Surg 1994; 9: 63-67.

4. On pages 9 and 13, the word "aneurysm" should be spelled with "Y".

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.