Reviewer’s report

Title: Early postoperative bone scintigraphy in the evaluation of microvascular bone grafts in head and neck reconstruction

Version: 1 Date: 5 March 2007

Reviewer: Johannes Kleinheinz

Reviewer’s report:

General
Schueppach et al. present a retrospective study including 60 patients with reconstruction of the mandible or maxilla using autogenous microvascular bone grafts. Microvascular status of the grafts was assessed using bone scintigraphy in early postoperative phase. Although it is not a new idea, the investigation is interesting. A few questions should be answered before decision of acceptance can be made.

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

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
- Indicate the reasons, why there have been two or more scans in 19 patients.
- Exact definition of the score system is missing in the method part and should be added. A picture demonstrating the different grades would be helpful.
- None of the eight fibula grafts with vascular failure could be saved. What was the benefit of the technique in these cases?
- Looking at the images it is difficult to decide what exactly can be seen: vessels, vascularization of periosteal layer, or intramedullary vascularization of bone? Please give more details in the figure legends
- Does bone scintigraphy really have the adequate resolution for the assessment of microvascularization?
- formatting of front page according to authors guidelines
- page 3, line 17: probes instead of Probes
- page 3, line 19: monitoring instead of Monitoring
- formatting references according to authors guidelines
- formatting the Table I according to authors guidelines
- formatting the list of grafts (table II?)
- formatting the Figures according to authors guidelines

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.