Reviewer’s report

Title: Complex pleural empyema can be safely treated with Vacuum-Assisted Closure

Version: 1 Date: 13 August 2011

Reviewer: Robert Scheubel

Reviewer’s report:

In this retrospective study Sziklavari et al investigated the efficacy and safety of VAC therapy in the treatment of complicated pleural empyema. Because of in some cases prolonged courses of pleural empyemas with long hospitalisation of the patients this is an interesting study. However I have some specific remarks which should be addressed:

Major points:

1. The authors should compare their collective with patients, who were treated with OWT without VAC therapy. Because this is a retrospective study such a comparison should be possible.

2. The authors should discuss more intensively what the indication and the advantage of early VAC-therapy compared to decortication therapy is.

Minor points:

1. After VAC therapy in five patients surgical closure was performed. However two patients rejected the closure of the OWT. The authors should describe the outcome of these two patients, too.

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 have no financial conflicts