Reviewer's report

Title: Mediastinoscope-Controlled Parasternal Fenestration of the Pericardium: Definitive Surgical Palliation of Malignant Pericardial Effusion

Version: 1 Date: 2 February 2012

Reviewer: Frank Detterbeck

Reviewer's report:

I think the technique is reasonable to publish as an alternative for pericardial effusion management.

I think clarification is needed for the statement that initially patients were randomized. This randomized comparison data should be reported, or else it should not even be mentioned if the authors do not think the data is valid.

I think the article could be shortened considerably without losing content. For example, I think there is little benefit to a photo of the closed incision. I think a survival curve does not require 2 figures, one with a confidence interval and one without.

I also think it could be much more focused. There is a lot of reporting and discussion of outcomes that really do not provide much of an ability to evaluate this procedure. The outcomes of interest, in my opinion are recurrence, pain and hospital length of stay. These outcomes are barely mentioned, with little data provided.

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

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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