Reviewer’s report

Title: Treatment outcomes in deep sternal wound infection after cardiac surgery; Vacuum-assisted closure versus conventional treatment

Version: 1 Date: 14 March 2012

Reviewer: Emre Özker

Reviewer's report:

The subject of the study is nothing new to the literature however it is a single center study with relevantly high number of adult cardiac patients and is well detailed except for some major issues.

The methods are well described but needs some more details.

The manuscript adheres to relevant standards for reporting the data.

The discussion and conclusion are well balanced and adequately supported by the data.

The title and abstract accurately convey what has been found in the study.

Major Compulsory Revisions

a. In text the authors say that “the surgical procedures which performed (rewiring, open dressings, closed irrigation or pectoral flaps) depended on the clinical condition of the patient and the surgeon’s preference”. How many patients underwent rewiring-open dressing-closed irrigation and pectoral flaps? What is the outcome in each technique? What are your selection criteria for VAC treatment? Is VAC your first line of treatment in deep sternal wound infection? How many patients had VAC treatment that had initially undergone operation with one of the aforementioned techniques?

b. Did you apply continuous or intermittent negative suction in VAC treatment?

c. Did you observe any complication during VAC treatment such as bleeding, secondary infection, hemodynamics or respiratory problems? Although VAC is claimed to stabilize the thorax and hence provide better respiratory functions (1,2,3,4), did you observe deterioration in respiratory status of some subgroup of patients?


d. Is there a difference in two groups in terms of secondary infections?
e. What is the mean follow up time in the study?

Minor Essential Revisions

a. You should rename the tables according to their order of appearance in the text.
b. Check the context of the tables, there are some spelling mistakes.
c. English must be proofread by a native speaker.
d. Some recent literature shall be used in the discussion.

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.