Author’s response to reviews

Title: Evaluation of the intraoperative specimens of the thoracic and abdominal aorta

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Version: 2 Date: 13 March 2013

Author’s response to reviews: see over
To
Vipin Zamvar
Editor-in-Chief
Journal of Cardiothoracic Surgery

Vienna, March 13th 2011

Dear Professor Zamvar

Thank you for reviewing our manuscript entitled “Evaluation of the intraoperative specimens of the thoracic and abdominal aorta” and for the extremely helpful and highly academic criticisms provided. According to the requests we have thoughtfully revised and rewritten the manuscript. In our impression, due to helpful criticisms provided, the manuscript has markedly gained correctness and sharpness. We would now provide with the revised form of the manuscript. Please find enclosed a detailed letter where we address all remarks listed by the reviewers. All changes made are highlighted.
Author's response to reviews
Evaluation of the intraoperative specimens of the thoracic and abdominal aorta

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Version: 1 Date: 13 March 2013

Author's response to reviews: see over
Reviewer's report #1
Title: Evaluation of the intraoperative specimens of the thoracic and abdominal aorta
Version: 1 Date: 25 January 2013
Reviewer: michael grimm

Reviewer's report:
The manuscript titled "Evaluation of intraoperative specimens of the thoracic and abdominal aorta" by Juraszek et al. reports on a large series of histological samples gained during aortic surgery. It is properly written and organized. The figures are illustrative and contributory.

The Introduction:
The section is brief and written in a general form. You have to provide literature data emphasizing the current knowledge, the association between histopathological findings and aortic pathology.

- Literature emphasizing the current knowledge about the aortic pathology has been included as the reviewer indicates.

Materials and Methods:
Specimens from 151 patients were examined for the presence of medial degeneration, atherosclerosis, and aortitis. Usual histological stainings were performed of the tissue of aortic dissections and aortic aneurysms. The authors have also analyzed the basic clinical condition of their patients. The hemodynamic status of the patients in the various groups (presence of Hypertension, diabetes, dyslipidemia, family history, connective tissue disease) was indicated. This may have a certain importance in a pathology which is obviously multifactorial.
- Thoracoabdominal aneurysms were excluded due to their multisegmentality. Why this is an exclusion criterion?
  - Multisegmental aneurysms can differ in their pathohistological entity.
  - This is a retrospective analysis, tissue samples were not taken from all segments of the aorta. Therefore multisegmental aneurysms were excluded to avoid bias.

- "Patients were stratified according to above and below 65 years of age" Please describe why you determined this threshold.
  - The age of 65 has been already used in one of the most recent papers analyzing the operative histopathology of the aorta:
  - We decided to adapt this cut-off point in our paper.

- Statistics should be described after the ethical approval.
  - Change made as indicated by the reviewer

- The work contains many figures which make it unnecessarily long.
  - We reduced the number of figures to 7.
Discussion:
The authors noted that high grade atherosclerosis was more common in patients older than 65 years of age who presented with aortic dissection, compared to younger patients. The authors conclude by their work “the need for accurate and early determination of patients being at risk for acute type A aortic dissection.” This conclusion is important in the cardiothoracic context. In my opinion this manuscript has a scientific value for being published.

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.

Declaration of competing interests:
Some of the authors have been former coworkers of me. But there is no interference (neither negative nor positive) with them affecting objective decision.
Reviewer's report #2

Title: Evaluation of the intraoperative specimens of the thoracic and abdominal Aorta

Version: 1 Date: 13 February 2013
Reviewer: Sanjay A Pai

Reviewer's report:
Major Compulsory Revisions
This is a potentially interesting paper. However, the manuscript has only 22 references while Bibliography refers to 31.
Reference 9 and 31 are the same, incidentally.
   The references and bibliography have been corrected.

The manuscript submitted appears to be incomplete and cannot be reviewed at the moment.
   We suppose it could be a technical problem. We submit a corrected and complete version of the manuscript.

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 COMPETING INTERESTS

We strongly believe that the changes made have markedly improved the manuscript and hope that our manuscript is now suitable for the high standard of the Journal of Cardiothoracic Surgery.

Hoping to hearing from you soon we remain with kind regards,

Andrzej Juraszek                        Tomasz Dziodzio