Reviewer's report

Title: Elevated Preoperative Neutrophil/Lymphocyte Ratio as a Predictor of Lower Long-term Mortality in Minimal Invasive Compared to Sternotomy Coronary Artery Bypass Surgery

Version: 1 Date: 10 June 2013

Reviewer: Syed M Rehman

Reviewer's report:

The authors have written a very interesting paper that suggests the value of using NLR to guide operative strategy (MICS vs sternotomy in CABG). The methodology is straightforward and easy to follow. The authors have accounted for CPB as a potentially important confounding factor. Their discussion importantly identifies relevant evidence that demonstrates a proportional relationship between invasiveness of the incision and NLR.

Minor Essential Revisions:

1. I note that the third tertile (NLR > 3.4) is the only group where there is significantly greater IMA use in patients undergoing MICS compared to sternotomy. IMA use is known to improve long-term outcome, therefore this is an important limitation of the study that should be acknowledged and explained.

2. Mean follow-up period described in Methodology should be stated with standard deviation rather than with range.

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: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.