Reviewer's report

Title: The Feasibility of a Two-incision Video-assisted Thoracoscopic Lobectomy

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Reviewer: Jianxing He

Reviewer's report:

Introduction:
‘Although a recent meta-analysis of randomized and nonrandomized trials demonstrated that VATS lobectomy is an appropriate procedure for selected patients with early-stage non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC), when compared with open surgery [8].....’ Yan et al. have already updated the meta-analysis (Cao C, Manganas C, Ang SC, Yan TD. A meta-analysis of unmatched and matched patients comparing video-assisted thoracoscopic lobectomy and conventional open lobectomy. Ann Cardiothorac Surg 2012;1(1):16-23. DOI: 10.3978/j.issn.2225-319X.2012.04.18). It will be great if authors can also cite the new one in the text.

Methods:
Authors should describe the statistical analysis with separate section in the text.

‘This study was performed on consecutive patients, who underwent major pulmonary resection (segmentectomy, lobectomy, bilobectomy, and pneumonectomy) through VATS using two incisions, from July 2010 to December 2011, in Korea Unversity Guro Hospital. The Ethics Committee of the Korea University Guro Hospital approved this study (KUGH12076).’ Is this study is a prospective trial, or retrospective trial? If it’s a prospective one, what’s the primary endpoint of this study, and how to calculate the sample size? Authors should report it in detail in the manuscript.

Discussion:
Authors should try to cite the references related to efficacy of mediastinal lymph node dissection during thoracoscopic lobectomy in the text (e.g. Wang H, D’Amico TA. Efficacy of mediastinal lymph node dissection during thoracoscopic lobectomy. Ann Cardiothorac Surg 2012;1(1):27-32. DOI: 10.3978/j.issn.2225-319X.2012.04.02)

It’s interesting there are two segmentectomy in this study, authors should try to compare the data with published one(s), and discuss it in the text (e.g. Wang BY, Liu CC, Shih CS. Short-Term Results of Thoracoscopic Lobectomy and Segmentectomy for Lung Cancer in Koo Foundation Sun Yat-Sen Cancer Center. J Thorac Dis 2010;2:64-70. DOI: 10.3978/j.issn.2072-1439.2010.02.02.007)
Shao et al. explored the feasibility and value in the clinical application of serum micro-ribonucleic acids (miRNAs) as biological markers for the early diagnosis of breast cancer as well as for the prediction of the biological behavior and prognosis of breast cancers, and found miRNA-10b and miRNA-206 can be used for the early prediction of lymph node metastasis and the presence of estrogen receptor in breast cancer patients, respectively, and miRNA-155 can be used in patients with early stage tumors to determine the propensity for tumor malignancy and to predict the clinical stage and prognosis. It’s an interesting study. However, there are some minor comments.

#1. Introduction: ‘miRNA microarrays were used to analyze the miRNA expression profiles of breast tumors and the corresponding adjacent tissue from 8 patients. Real-time quantitative reverse transcriptase-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) was used to validate the results of the miRNA microarrays and to screen for miRNAs that show differential expression based on the tissue type. Four types of miRNAs that displayed significant differential expression were obtained through our screen and were selected as potential miRNA biomarkers. Real-time quantitative RT-PCR was used to analyze the expression of the putative miRNA biomarkers in the serum of 165 untreated breast cancer patients and 120 healthy control subjects.’ These sentences should be deleted in the introduction, as they were related to the ‘Methods’, not the background of this study.

#2. The section title ‘Subjects and Methods’ should be revised to ‘Materials and Methods’.

#3. ‘This study used 8 post-operative breast cancer tissue specimens and adjacent normal tissue obtained from patients between January 2011 and March 2011.’ Were these 8 patients selective?

#4. SPSS 17.0 statistical software (SPSS, XX, XX ?)

Discovered in recent years, micro ribonucleic acid (miRNA) is an endogenous non-coding RNA approximately 21-23 nucleotides in length and is involved in regulating cell development, proliferation, differentiation, and apoptosis by down-regulating the expression of their target genes. Authors found that miRNA-10b and miRNA-206 can be used for the early prediction of lymph node metastasis and the presence of estrogen receptor in breast cancer patients, respectively, and miRNA-155 can be used in patients with early stage tumors to determine the propensity for tumor malignancy and to predict the clinical stage and prognosis. This is well-written article.

Comments:

--This study used 8 post-operative breast cancer tissue specimens and adjacent normal tissue obtained from patients between January 2011 and March 2011.’ However, there were 165 patients in Table 1.
--Please describe the issue in the text. And Table 1 and 2 should change the order in the text.

--In the discussion section, ‘Most studies on the relationship between miRNA expression and breast cancer have been performed using breast cancer cell lines and breast cancer tissue; only a few studies before the current study have investigated miRNA expression in the serum of breast cancer patients.’ Authors should cite related references in the sentence.

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:

None.