Reviewer’s report

**Title:** The efficacy of Video-Assisted Thoracoscopic Surgery Lung Biopsies in patients with Interstitial Lung Disease: a retrospective study of 66 patients

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 3 January 2014

**Reviewer:** Mark T Jones

**Reviewer’s report:**

1. This manuscript describes the contribution to the diagnostic and therapeutic pathways of performing VATS lung biopsies in patients without a definite diagnosis of interstitial lung disease. This is a controversial area in the management of these patients. Broadly polarised, the two approaches consist of a negativity to surgical biopsy in patients properly processed through an MDT, and a more "pro" approach in patients with atypical findings, where a confident diagnosis cannot be made and important consequences for patients with differing prognoses. There’s the limitations of the retrospective study with missing data from the Trakcare which would have added to the conclusions.

This manuscript does add to the literature.

2. No major revision

3. Minor revisions - it would be helpful to know whether these patients had been processed through an MDT, how does the MDT decide on surgical referral? VATS isn't an innocuous procedure, there has been one death - what were the circumstances? , there's no mention of the pain of the procedure - neuropathic pain is described after VATS, and is a concern for chest physicians. There’s no mention of other diagnostic tools eg cryoprobe biopsy.

4. Minor other comments - why use a 32F chest drain? when a more gentle 20F drain would do. Discussion 6th para "My data", end para 8 "who's CT scans"

**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:**

I have no competing interests