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: 9 January 2014

Reviewer: Jemi Olak

Reviewer’s report:

This is a retrospective review of 66 consecutive patients who underwent VATS lung biopsy for ILD suspected on CT scan at the New Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh over a 21 month period (5/16/2011-2/11/2013) in order to obtain a specific diagnosis. The authors were interested in determining how often a definitive diagnosis could be obtained with this technique and how often treatment was altered as a result of the procedure.

The authors report that 1/3rd of patients had no specific diagnosis prior to the procedure despite CT scan and a bronchoscopy with BAL and TBLB.

Major Compulsory Revisions: none

Minor Essential Revisions:
1) on Page 5 para 2 last sentence: Biopsies were injected with formalin and sent to Pathology. Please clarify as biopsies are usually placed in a jar containing formalin.

2) Consideration might be given to reducing the number of tables. Tables 1 and 3 are covered in the text.

3) What is considered "delayed wound healing"?

4) Rather than have a list of abbreviations, consider incorporating them into the manuscript the first time they are mentioned.

Discretionary Revisions:
1) Consider removing Table 4A as it is quite busy and hard to follow and is covered in the text very well.

2) In the discussion section, I would like the authors to comment on the fact that only 42.2% of their patients had more than 1 lung biopsy. There is literature to suggest that more than one biopsy improves the likelihood of obtaining a specific diagnosis. Was this the case in the authors cohort? It would also be interesting to see if patients who had more than one biopsy experiences more complications than those who had only one biopsy.

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:

no disclosures