Reviewer's report

**Title:** Surgical treatment of infective endocarditis in active intravenous drug users: A justified procedure?

**Version:** 1  
**Date:** 5 January 2014

**Reviewer:** Philipp Kolat

**Reviewer's report:**

Dear Editorial Team,

The authors deal with a topic of great relevance and increasing frequency. Drug-associated endocarditic infections represent an enormous challenge, especially in patients with active drug abuse. The surgical procedure is demanding, the (long-term) outcome remains more than questionable. This is already revealed in the recent literature.

The authors present their experience with this very special cohort of patients at the University Hospital in Heidelberg. 20 patients underwent surgery for infective endocarditis with a history of active intravenous drug abuse.

The results presented here, illustrate that it is crucial to act in time and especially in a radical manner. Only the generous excision of infected tissue is able to control the infection and to preserve a chance of survival. This is supported by the fact that the survival rate remains the same between the 3rd and the 5th follow-up-year. This is surely remarkable. The structure of the manuscript is well balanced, statistical analysis is satisfactory, the writing is appropriate besides a few spelling mistakes.

Apart from the information given here, we still have some remaining questions:

Why have the authors chosen a 90d cutoff?

How huge was the extent of septic emboli, particularly the cerebral ones?

How long had the patients been treated with antibiotics before operation?

Do the authors have a „plan B“ for potential re-infection?

In summary, we can support the publication of this manuscript.

With kind regards,

Ph. Kolat

**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 declare that I have no competing interests.