Author's response to reviews

Title: Removal of a Bullet Fragment from the Cervical Spinal Cord using a Minimally Invasive Surgical Approach: Case Report

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Dear Dr. Kidd,

Please find the enclosed revised manuscript number 4031443966421363, entitled “Removal of a Bullet Fragment from the Cervical Spinal Cord using a Minimally Invasive Surgical Approach: A Case Report” re-submitting to the Journal of Medical Case Reports for consideration for publication.

We have addressed the reviewer and editor comments in a point-by-point fashion below. This work has not been previously published. The authors have no direct conflict of interest related to this paper. All financial disclosures have been appropriately disclosed on the forms provided by the Journal of Medical Case Reports. The manuscript has not been previously published in whole or in part.

All revisions were made with the “Track Changes” function as suggested by the editors. In addition, we have changed the order of the authors to reflect the continued contributions and modifications of the manuscript by Drs. Cort Lawton
and Zachary A. Smith. Following revision, Dr. Cort D. Lawton will be the primary and major contributor of this work.

Point-by-Point Revisions:

Editorial Team: Please include the ethnicity of the patient in the abstract and case presentation section of the manuscript.

Response: We have modified this as suggested to add the ethnicity.

Editorial Team: Please replace the header to “Case Report” or “Case Presentation”

Response: We have made this change as suggested.

Editorial Team: In keeping with the journal’s style, please remove the sub-sections/sub-headings from the case presentation (Eg: Surgical Technique).

Response: At the specific area in question in the text (page 3, prior to paragraph 3), we have removed the subheading title “Surgical Technique” to keep consistent with the style of the journal.

Editorial Team: Please revise the consent statement to confirm that informed written consent was received for publication of the manuscript and figures.

Response: As suggested by the editorial team, we have made these changes in the body of the text under the sub-heading “Consent” following the “Conclusion” on page 6.

Editorial Team: Please include the following as the last sentence of the author’s contribution section: “All authors read and approved the final manuscript.”

Response: We have added this final sentence. In addition, given that we have changed the order of the authors based upon the wishes of the senior author (RGF), the contributions of each author was modified appropriately.

Reviewer #1 comments:

Reviewer: “This is not the first case report to use a minimally invasive approach to remove bullet fragments [J Trauma. 2007 May;62(5):1290-1].”

Response: To our knowledge, this is one of the initial reports of bullet fragment removal in the cervical spine. However, we thank the reviewer for this specific reference. To note this, we have added this reference in the text and discussed this paper’s contribution. We have also added an additional reference of
Tumialan et. al, Spine J, 2009. We have also made it clear that this is not the first report.

Added references:


Reviewer: The reviewer asks, "Do you have intra-operative fluoroscopic images?"

Response: Unfortunately, although these were taken during the operation, they have not been saved into our imaging network. If these were available, they would have been included in the manuscript.

Reviewer: The reviewer states, "The discussion needs to be shortened."

Response: We have removed approximately 40% of the text of the discussion, including 5 references. All but three lines were removed from the final (and longest) paragraph of the discussion.

Reviewer #2 comments: We thank the reviewer for their kind remarks with regard to our manuscript.

Reviewer: With regard to the general discussion, the reviewer comment, "In the discussion, it may be worth noting that an MIS approach may be warranted in patients who are critical and may not be stable for a larger more invasive surgery."

Response: We have added specific lines in the manuscript discussion to discuss this point as suggested by the reviewer. The final two lines of paragraph 1 in the discussion have been added (page 4, paragraph 3, lines 6 and 7.) Based upon the reviewer’s other comments, we have taken the liberty of adding the word “feasibility” to the abstract in adding the final line “In addition, this report may help to highlight the feasibility of this approach” to the abstract.

Sincerely,

Richard G. Fessler, M.D., PhD
Professor