Reviewer’s report

Title: The effects of adding epinephrine to ropivacaine for popliteal nerve block on the duration of postoperative analgesia: a randomized controlled trial

Version: 1 Date: 20 April 2015

Reviewer: Stephen Choi

Reviewer’s report:

Major compulsory Revisions

Thank you to the authors for the response to our comments, they address many of the issues that were brought up.

1. The authors and I will have to agree to disagree regarding the rationale for excluding patients who did not make a request for additional analgesics in the study period being removed from analysis and replaced with new participants. From the other reviewers’ comments, it appears both Dr. Dillane and I agree in this respect that this is a methodologic concern and one in which block duration and TTFR are not the same outcome although the authors used TTFR as a surrogate for block duration. By the authors own definition of block failure (page 7, line 121) no request for analgesia (even up to 48h) should be considered a block success Since the authors appear to have collected both outcomes, TTFR and duration of sensory/motor block, perhaps they should have been presented separately.

2. Page 5, line 84: Why were anesthesiologists performing the block procedure not blinded? There is no reason for this. It can only serve to create bias.

3. Response letter page 3, point 2: The authors state 'surgery was started before the onset of block and patients were operated under general anesthesia with long acting opioids'. This is inconsistent with the study protocol page 5/6 lines 95 to 98 where it states that surgery was performed under regional alone, GA only for surgery > 120 minutes with no mention of long acting opioid. This is a major difference in protocol - which was performed because it could materially change the results and subsequent interpretation.

4. Page 6 line 104-107: Where is the data regarding opioid use?

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:

No conflicts to declare