Reviewer’s report

Title: Preoperative versus postoperative ultrasound-guided rectus sheath block for improving pain, sleep quality and cytokine levels in patients with open midline incisions undergoing transabdominal gynecological surgery: A randomized-controlled trial

Version: 0 Date: 02 Nov 2017

Reviewer: Antonio Gioia

Reviewer’s report:

This study highlights a very interesting issue about timing of rectus sheath block. Nevertheless, does not offer a clear answer.

Post-operative sleep quality is a complex topic and the cytokines correlation it appears to be only one of the variables to take in consideration.

The study has a couple of major limitations that need to be clarified:

- The title is too much generic. Please reformulate the title in order to indicate better the aim of the study.
- In Background paragraph of the abstract there is not a "background" of the study, but the aim of the study. Please rewrite this passage.
- I have an issue about masking. In order to explain the operator masking, could you please specify who else knew about the group allocation of the patient and who was in charge of "blind" drug/saline preparation?
- Please specify the timing of blood samples for inflammatory cytokines. In the text it is not clear if the baseline blood sample was taken before induction, after induction before RSB, after RSB before the surgical incision or after. "During operation" is too generic.
- Redundant methods notes in patient paragraph
- PSQI was measured one day before the surgery reflecting the difference between good sleepers and poor sleepers, but have you considered also the preoperative night's sleep?
- Do you have BIS data of the preoperative night?
- Are OSAS patients excluded by this study?
- In "BIS-AUC and sleep…” paragraph, page 14, why do you mention a "Propofol group"? It was not mentioned in the anesthetic description. Please correct or clarify.
Does the sample size calculated on sleep effects of the pilot study differs substantially from the sample size calculated for this study?

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

No

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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