Reviewer’s report

Title: A retrospective clinical and microbial analysis of 32 patients with bilomas

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Reviewer: Evangelos Kalaitzakis

Reviewer’s report:

Würstle et al have performed a case-series study aiming to investigate the etiology, clinical presentation, pathogen spectrum and treatment of patients with bilomas. They retrospectively enrolled 32 patients with bilomas (identified by means of a search in their endoscopy database amongst patients having undergone ERCP or PTC). Most patients (66%) developed bilomas following surgery. 34% of patients had multiple bilomas. Ten out of 32 patients had infected bilomas (31%) according to clinical criteria (fever and CRP elevation and/or leukocytosis). Bile cultures were performed in 25/32 patients (78%) and 23/25 had a positive culture. Multiresistant bacteria were isolated from 8/32 (25% of patients) or 8/25 (32%) of those cultured. Most patients received interventional treatment. 80% of patients receiving interventional treatment as well as 80% of those treated in a conservative fashion achieved complete biloma resolution during follow-up.

Major concerns

1. Microbial pathogens were isolated from the bile of patients without clinically infected bilomas. The authors, however, do not provide data on isolates from infected bilomas which would probably be very meaningful. Also, do the authors feel that isolates from non-clinically infected patients were clinically relevant?

2. A large proportion of patients in the study received antibiotics (p.10, l. 204; 11/32 piperacillin/tazobactam and 18/32 ciprofloxacin). It is unclear why this is the case. Was this post operative/post-transplant rather than due to a diagnosed infection/infected biloma? If yes, may this have prevented the diagnosis of further "clinically" infected bilomas?

3. As the authors acknowledge, patients were identified through an endoscopy database; thus, they were more likely to require interventional therapy. Also, 37% of patients developed bilomas after liver transplantation or liver resection. This may have influenced the generalizability of the results of the study.

Minor concerns

1. Please provide tables at the end of the paper and do not embed them in the text.
2. Table 4, 3rd and 5th column: Please change "Number of patients (%)…" to "Proportion of patients (%)…"

3. The paper would probably benefit from a grammar check.

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Yes

**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.

I am able to assess the statistics

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

Needs some language corrections before being published

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