Author’s response to reviews

Title: Difficulty of predicting the presence of lymph node metastases in patients with clinical early stage gastric cancer: A case control study.

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Author’s response to reviews:

To Reviewer #1:

1. All the abbreviations include, but are not limited to, "AGC"," NCT", should be added in the List of Abbreviations, for the convenience of readers.

→I’m sorry for our carelessness on this issue. However, after considering the comment 3 (Structural issues) from the Reviewer 2, we decided not to use so many abbreviations including “AGC” and “NCT” in this manuscript.
2. In the "ROC Curves using Independent Predictive Factors" section, how did the authors construct ROC curves using postoperative and preoperative independent predictive factors? Did you integrate the independent predictive factors (more than one variable) into single variable, using certain formula or model? Please describe the construction process in more detail.

→I admit that our description regarding ROC curves was insufficient. As we added further explanation in the manuscript, ROC curves were obtained by the probability of finally selected multivariate logistic regression model (Postoperative: age, tumor size, and T-stage, Preoperative: age, ulcer, tumor size, and prediction of the presence of lymph node metastasis in CT scan) and the event (lymph node metastasis). The area under the curve, sensitivity, specificity, positive predictive value, and negative predictive value were calculated using R version 3.0.1 (http://www.R-project.org/) using the “pROC” and “Optimal Cutpoints” packages, and the cutoff point was determined by the Youden method.

To Reviewer #2:

1. Language Issues

   a. The wording needs to be changed throughout. We do not "predict lymph node metastases"…. We predict "the presence of lymph node metastases".

→Thank you very much for pointing it out. We have changed it throughout the manuscript.

   b. The conclusion in the abstract "There were obvious discrepancies seen…" is a very strange sentence and conveys nothing. Values of what?

→We agree with your opinion, and we have omitted the sentence above. Now the revised conclusion is more simplified.

   c. We do not perform "CT". We perform "CT scans". Please change to "CT scan" throughout.

→I appreciate the instructive comment. We have changed it accordingly throughout the manuscript.

2. Structural Issues

   a. The title should convey the major result of the study. Please re-write the title.

→Thank you very much for your comment on the title. We changed the title as follows; “Difficulty to predict the presence of lymph node metastasis of clinical stage early gastric cancer: a case control study.”
Please kindly consider our new title above.

b. Remove all abbreviations from the abstract

→As you pointed out, the abbreviations in the abstract should not be used. We removed all abbreviations in the abstract.

c. There are far too many abbreviations throughout the paper. In particular, some abbreviations are defined and then only used once or twice. Please remove all abbreviations except EUS, CT, EGD, FDG-PET. All others are non-standard or used too infrequently.

→I agree with your opinion, and the way we used some of abbreviations were inappropriate. We have removed all inappropriate abbreviations except EUS, CT, EGD, FDG-PET in the manuscript. However, if it is permitted, we would like to use some abbreviations in tables and figures so that they would not look quite busy.

If you recommend us not to use abbreviations in tables and figures, either, I surely do not have any objection for it. But it would be greatly appreciated if you would kindly understand our request.

3. Scientific Issues

a. Please explain the ROC curves in greater detail.

→I suppose this is the same comment as comment 2 from the reviewer 1, so please kindly refer to our reply above.

Once again, thank you very much for sharing your time and your kind devotion to our article. Now we believe our article has become more sophisticated and organized thanks to your instructive comments.

We are sincerely looking forward to hearing from you again.

Sincerely yours,

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