Author’s response to reviews

Title: Prognostic Value of Total Tumor Volume in Patients with Nasopharyngeal Carcinoma Treated with Intensity-Modulated Radiotherapy

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Reviewer 1

Most of the previous ambiguous points have been well revised.

However, it is not easy to understand that cN0 cases have the mean NTV of 2.6 cc (range, 0-13.1 cc). Authors already described that the retropharyngeal lymph nodes were regarded as if they were primary tumor in volume measurement because of the close proximity of these nodes to the primary tumor. Therefore, cN0 cases should have had no volume measured. Authors are required to clarify this contradiction.

Answer:

Thank you for this comment.
We carefully examined the nodal tumor volume (NTV) delineation. The reason of which cN0 cases had the mean NTV of 2.6 cc (range, 0-13.1 cc), was that the suspected metastatic lymph nodes were delineated. Based on the criteria of metastatic lymph nodes recommended by Van et al. and Mao et al [1, 2], these suspected metastatic lymph nodes were excluded, and the related results were all reanalysed. This information has been added to the manuscript (Abstract section, line 53-65, page 3-4; Results section, line 201-250, page 10-12).

References
