Reviewer’s report

Title: Treatment of thulium laser for upper tract urothelial carcinoma via ureteroscopy: a retrospective monocentric study

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Reviewer: Adam Gadzinski

Reviewer's report:

Overall - The English and overall composition of this manuscript is unfortunately very poor. It significantly and negatively impacts the readability of this manuscript.

Title - As written is confusing, perhaps "Treatment of upper tract urothelial carcinoma with ureteroscopy and thulium laser: a retrospective single center study." (I would not use the word monocentric).

Study design: The authors performed a retrospective cohort review comparing patients managed with minimally invasive techniques using thulium laser versus those managed with nephroureterectomy.

Background: Please include references when discussing incidence of disease (the authors mention 2-5% with no reference listed).

Methods: The authors do not describe where the nephroureterectomy cohort was obtained from, and actually this cohort is not even discussed in the methods section. There are multiple questions that must be answered regarding the design of this study:

1) Was this project done as part of a research study with IRB approval or is this a quality improvement study? Where patients offered both options of nephroureterectomy or ureteroscopy?

2) Where did the nephrectomy cohort come from? Was it over the same time frame as the ureteroscopic cohort? At the same institution? Also the authors should briefly describe their laparoscopic technique (open bladder cuff? Hand-assisted?).
There are numerous spelling errors and poor grammar, a few examples:

- "vigid" ureteroscope should be "rigid"
- Tumpr "ecurrenece" should be "recurrence"
- The spacing around periods and commas is very irregular, inconsistent, and distracting to the reader.

The statistical method are appropriate, but the comparison is very minimalistic. There is no time to recurrence-free survival analysis (Kaplan-Meier), as many other studies of this style have done. Nor do they report the mean or median time to recurrence. No overall survival data.

Results: Very minimalistic reporting. As expected, endoscopically managed patients had lower grade and smaller tumors. Higher recurrence rate was in the endoscopic group. Were these upper tract recurrences, bladder recurrences, or a combination of both? In the Table they compare recurrence rates to the nephroureterectomy group, so I would guess these are not exclusive upper tract recurrences.

The authors state that metastatic disease has not occurred, is this also true for the nephroureterectomy group?

Discussion: Again, the overall poor English and grammar make this difficult to interpret, also the authors do not compare their findings directly to many of the cohorts in the minimally invasive UTUC literature (This list is not exhaustive, a represents some of the initial published cohorts).


I think the authors should examine the designs, results, and statistical methods of some of the above papers as well to help them reframe their organization, analysis and presentation of their results.

The authors acknowledge that their N is small, and of the retrospective design of the study. They conclude as many others have done that minimally invasive management for small, low-grade tumors is feasible. There is no significant novel aspect to this study, other than perhaps the use of the thulium laser instead of Holmium laser. If this is true, the authors should emphasize this in their manuscript. Overall, significant additional explanation of the cohorts and methods, data presentation, and analysis are needed to allow for this study to provide a contribution to the existing literature. Furthermore, extensive revision of the spelling, grammar and writing is needed to make any revised results accessible to readers.

**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.

Unable to assess

**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:

Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited
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