Reviewer's report

Title: Comparative Efficacy of Six Therapies for Hypopharyngeal and Laryngeal Neoplasms: a Network Meta-analysis

Version: 1 Date: 09 Jun 2018

Reviewer: Henry Park

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for your thoughtful responses to the reviewers' comments, especially adding in Table S1 with the details of your primary outcomes data. I still have one major issue remaining that I do not believe have been adequately addressed. I understand the concept of clinical heterogeneity, but I do not believe that this is sufficiently accounted for when papers focusing completely on early-stage (stage I-II) glottic cancers (for whom the decision is surgery vs. RT) are lumped in with laryngeal/hypopharyngeal cancers of all stages (for locally advanced stages like larynx stage III-IV and hypopharynx stage II-IV, then surgery+RT vs. CCRT vs. ICRT tend to be the choices). The concept of network meta-analysis is very interesting, but is not compelling enough to make the conclusions that RT alone is an inferior strategy in general (even though compared to TLM or surgery for early-stage glottic it may be just as good) and surgery+RT is a superior strategy in general (since this is not a recommended option for anyone with early-stage glottic cancer). There are 7 papers included that appear to include only early-stage glottic cancers, and even more than include only locally advanced stages), so why not stratify by this factor and determine the optimal strategy for each of these subgroups? This change would make this paper clinically meaningful, whereas now the conclusions do not make any logical sense for an oncologist to help make clinical decisions.

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.

No
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I am able to assess the statistics

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