Reviewer’s report

Title: Controlling nutritional status (CONUT) score as a preoperative risk assessment index for older patients with colorectal cancer

Version: 0 Date: 12 Jul 2019

Reviewer: Reviewer 2

Reviewer's report:

PEER REVIEWER ASSESSMENTS:

OBJECTIVE - Full research articles: is there a clear objective that addresses a testable research question(s) (brief or other article types: is there a clear objective)?
Yes - there is a clear objective

DESIGN - Is the current approach (including controls and analysis protocols) appropriate for the objective?
Yes - the approach is appropriate

EXECUTION - Are the experiments and analyses performed with technical rigor to allow confidence in the results?
Yes - experiments and analyses were performed appropriately

STATISTICS - Is the use of statistics in the manuscript appropriate?
Yes - appropriate statistical analyses have been used in the study

INTERPRETATION - Is the current interpretation/discussion of the results reasonable and not overstated?
Yes - the author's interpretation is reasonable

OVERALL MANUSCRIPT POTENTIAL - Is the current version of this work technically sound? If not, can revisions be made to make the work technically sound?
Probably - with minor revisions

PEER REVIEWER COMMENTS:

GENERAL COMMENTS: Solid study
ADDITIONAL REQUESTS/SUGGESTIONS:
I'd like to congratulate the authors with a nice piece of work. This is an informative paper showing the value of the CONUT score.
- Table 2: I'd recommend to take the lowest category of each score as reference and compare the higher categories with the lowest category.
- Could the authors add a list of complication definitions as a supplement?
- Normally, complications graded Clavien Dindo 3 and higher are considered severe/serious complications. Could the authors add an analysis regarding these complications?
- A previous study showed that the appropriate cutoff of the CONUT score to predict postoperative major complications would be between 4 and 5. Could the authors add an additional analysis using this
principle?
- Were patients with higher tumor stage also the patients with poorer CONUT scores? It would be helpful to describe patient characteristics stratified for CONUT categories.
- How was BMI added to the multivariable model?
- Could the authors add tables including the Cox proportional hazard models?
  - Did the authors consider to measure skeletal muscle mass and adiposity on abdominal CT scans? This has recently also been described as an important nutritional and physical status parameter.

**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:

Acceptable
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