Reviewer’s report

Title: Comparison of serum markers for muscle damage, postoperative recovery, and surgical site pain after extreme lateral interbody fusion with percutaneous pedicle screws or traditional open posterior lumbar interbody fusion

Version: 0 Date: 24 Jun 2017

Reviewer: Kai Sprengel

Reviewer's report:

1) The procedure performing the 1 year follow up and the time range of the follow ups should be presented. Are there any additional parameters looking for bony healing, revision surgery or implant failures after 1 year (e.g. X-Ray, CT-Scan). No drop outs?

2) ANOVA instead of the t-test is indicated for ordinal scaled variables, like the NRS (not VAS), ECOG and probably some scores.

3) It should be clarified, that the surgeons were familiar with the XLIF procedure at the beginning of the study, so that there was no learning curve.

4) In my opinion blood loss is a crucial parameter, because it is difficult to measure and mostly an estimation. This should critically be discussed.

5) Page 4, Row 21: Using allograft bone instead of autologous bone indicates that there was no rib resection in the XLIF group performed. This should be clarified.

6) Table 1: Range of fused level will be interesting also as the smoking status.

I thank the authors for this interesting study and wish them all the best for a successful publication.

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?  
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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

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