Reviewer’s report

Title: Survival after laparoscopic and open surgery for colon cancer: a comparative, single-institution study

Version: 2  
Date: 28 December 2014

Reviewer: Seung Hyuk Baik

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This study evaluated the oncologic outcomes of laparoscopic colon cancer surgery compared to open colon cancer surgery. The main conclusion was that there was survival superiority in laparoscopic surgery for stage II colon cancer compared to open surgery.

This study is a retrospective design and the surgical procedure was not randomized. One surgeon performed only open surgery. The duration of the study period is long with 8 years. These aspects lowered the power of the study.

The main issue of this study is that the number of harvested lymph nodes was larger in the laparoscopic group than the open group. The surgical concept in this study just followed Cianchi et al.’s study in both laparoscopic and open surgeries. Thus, there was no reason for the harvested lymph node number discrepancy between the procedures. The main difference between laparoscopic and open surgeries is the abdominal wound size. The surgical resection margin and plane is not different because both procedures should follow the standard oncologic principle. In this study, the surgeon’s bias is implied with the results that the number of harvested lymph nodes in laparoscopic surgery was larger than open surgery. Moreover, the survival data of stage II was questionable (too much better in the lap group (90.7%) and too low in the open group (75.8%).

Conversely, if the pathologic parameters are similar, these discrepancies of the oncologic outcomes may be explained by using immunologic consideration.

In stage III, the oncologic outcome was similar between the groups although the number of harvested lymph nodes was different between groups. These finding also shows the results of stage II as being biased.

Level of interest: An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests'