Author’s response to reviews

Title: A comparative study of irrigation versus no irrigation during burr hole craniostomy to treat chronic subdural hematoma

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30 Aug 2017

Dear Editor Anne Menard,

I greatly appreciate both your help and that of the reviewers concerning improvement to our paper entitled "A comparative study of irrigation versus no irrigation during burr hole craniostomy to treat chronic subdural hematoma" (BSUR-D-17-00147R1).

We have revised the manuscript, according to the comments and suggestions of reviewers and editor, and responded, point by point to, the comments as listed below.

We would like to re-submit this revised manuscript to BMC Surgery, and hope it is acceptable for publication in the journal.

Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

With kindest regards.

Yours Sincerely

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Replies to Editor and Reviewers

First of all, we thank both reviewer and editor for their positive and constructive comments and suggestions.

Replies to Editor

1. Please clarify whether the datasets you used in this study were de-identified. If so, please include this information in the manuscript.

If the datasets were not de-identified, were the patients aware that their data was being utilised in this study and did they consent to its use. If so, please include this information in the Ethical approval and consent to participate section.

Answer: The datasets used in this study were de-identified. We added the information in the Methods section, line 2, page 4.

2. Please clarify where Figure 1 is from. Is this an image from a patient included in this study? If so, there needs to be consent to publish from this patient for the use of their images.

If this image is from another study, was permission sought and granted to use this image? If so, please include this information in the response box.

Answer: This image is from the preliminary report of the present study, which was published in West China Medicine Journal. We have got the permission to republish this image. We explained it in line 2-4, page 8.

3. Please translate the headings in the additional files to English.

Answer: We have made a revision according to your instruction.
4. Please include the title page not as an additional file, but as the first page of your manuscript, including the title of the manuscript, full names of all the authors in the correct order, with full author affiliations and email addresses of all authors.

Answer: We have made an amendment according to your instruction.

5. At this stage, please upload your manuscript as a single, final, clean version that does not contain any tracked changes, comments, highlights, strikethroughs or text in different colours. All relevant tables/figures/additional files should also be clean versions. Figures (and additional files) should remain uploaded as separate files.

Answer: We complete the process according to your instruction.

6. Please answer all of the reviewers' comments which can be found at the bottom of this letter.

Answer: We answer all of the reviewers' comments listed below.

Replies to Reviewer #1:

Mehmet Sabri GÜRBÜZ (Reviewer 1): The authors have completed the necessary revisions appropriately.

Answer: We greatly appreciate your help.

Replies to Reviewer #3:

Lennart Henning Stieglitz (Reviewer 3): The point I made when I revised the manuscript first, that another retrospective study will not be helpful answering the study questions, is still valid.

Answer: This study was a retrospective cohort and has several limitations, and it couldn’t provide evidence with high level to validate the question. However, it could present our experience and data for reference. There are limited RCTs regarding this question, and we are planning to perform a RCT.
The authors answered to my concerns about a possible allocation error by providing completely new data. They claim, that an allocation error cannot exist, as only four groups were involved in the study, of which 2 stuck to the first technique and the other two to the second. The answer is good and solves the problem. I simply wonder, why they didn't provide this important information in the original manuscript and very much hope, this data is valid.

Answer: Thank you for your constructive suggestions. We didn't describe this issue precisely in the original manuscript. We have made an amendment according to your advice.

Unfortunately, the authors didn't want to provide statistical power to their results as requested by me. That is sad, because it can easily be computed from the data provided in the manuscript. Concerning the postoperative pneumocrania, the effect size is 1.409 and the power is 1.0. Computing that took 2 minutes and strengthens the main result a lot.

Answer: We have provided statistical power according to your advice (Table 2). We also made supplementary description in the manuscript (Discussion section, line 20-22, page 11).