Reviewer’s report

Title: Emergency inguinal hernioplasties in a Tertiary Public Hospital in Athens Greece, during the Economic Crisis

Version: 0 Date: 09 Jun 2018

Reviewer: Niccolo Allievi

Reviewers report:

The present paper is a retrospective review, comparing characteristics of patients, therapeutic interventions and outcomes between two historical groups of patients (2005-2009 versus 2012-2016) treated for inguinal hernia at a Tertiary Hospital in Athens, Greece.

In view of the significant changes occurred in Greek socio-economic situation between 2009 and 2018, the aims of the current study are to compare patients' features, intraoperative finding and perioperative outcomes, analysing potential modifications induced by the economic crisis.

Considering the intrinsic importance of the issue, the resonance received by the mass media and the presence of previous studies concentrated mostly on medical pathology, the current study covers an interesting topic for the General Surgeons working both at district and referral hospitals in Europe; the results of the study give ground for extensive reflection.

However, some major and minor revisions may be beneficial:

Major comments:

* Regarding the inclusion of migrant/refugee population, although this issue might represent an interesting socio-economic insight, this data might be flawed by a considerable sampling bias. Furthermore, the so called 'legal immigrants' surely represent a quote of the population in Athens, therefore the assumption that every patient who is not a migrant/refugee is a 'Greek citizen' is precipitous.

* The increase of migrant/refugee population in the emergency setting (from 3.6% to 5.9%) represents a non-statistically significant increase, the clinical and socio-economic significance of this finding are limited in the reviewer's opinion.

* The final recommendation regarding a more reasonable distribution of the workload in order to support small district hospitals does not seem to be supported by data presented within the study and, though worthy of endorsement on a theoretical base, should be filtered with the aims and constructs of the current study.

* A comment on limitations of the current study, including the retrospective nature and the lack of interesting variable -such as complication and re-admission rate-, should be added within the Discussion section.
Minor comments:

* Tables: presentation of both the absolute numbers and the due proportion for binomial/categorical variables inside the tables is advisable.

* The possibility that the referral and on-call system in the Greek capital has changed from 2005 to 2016 appears to be high. The Author could clarify this issue in the Method section.

**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

**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

**Declaration of competing interests**
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?
3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal.