Author’s response to reviews

Title: Identifying risk factors for metastasis to the level VII lymph node in papillary thyroid carcinoma patients

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Dear Reviewer and Editors,

Thanks very much for your comments. We appreciate your suggestions and revised the manuscript. We have responded all attached comments point-by-point and resubmitted our manuscript.

Answers to Reviewer’s questions were as follows:

Thomas J. Fahey (Reviewer 1):

--"Failure to include Level VII MAY leave significant .....“ Can not state that it will - especially in prophylactic CND dissection.

--Thanks very much for your comment. We revise the word as your suggestion (Discussion section Page 9 line 198).

--since mediastinal recurrences leading to life-threatening problems due to local Level VII recurrence are exceedingly rare, this sentence must be modified to include a qualifier - such as - "Though these are rare events...."

--Thanks very much for your comments. As your suggestion, we add the qualifier (Discussion section Page 10 line 199-200).
--For PTC patients with ultrasonography-positive LNs - consideration could be given to performing a Level VII dissection. It can not be said that it should be done since the overwhelming majority of patients do not have Level VII recurrence and we do not know the long-term implications of having dormant positive lymph nodes in Level VII.

--Your comment is extremely valuable. We have to be very cautious about level VII lymph node dissection because the indication and prognostic value of prophylactic CLND are still controversial. We modify the recommendation and will continue the research (Discussion section Page 10 line 219-222).