Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 0 Date: 04 Aug 2019

Reviewer: Thomas J. Fahey

Reviewer's report:

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Chen et al examine the incidence and risk factors for Level VII LN metastases in a series of patients undergoing routine prophylactic CND that included Level VII. The manuscript requires attention to English grammar.

Comments:

Major:

1. The authors present a nice series of prophylactic CND dissection that also included a Level VII dissection. It is unclear what the authors mean by "Intraoperative LN exploration" in Table 2 and in the manuscript. It is suggested that all patients underwent Level VII dissection -so what does this mean and how did affect the extent of surgery and/or LN dissection.

2. The authors recommend including Level VII nodes in prophylactic CND. However, what they have failed to address in this manuscript is what is the real benefit of prophylactic CND -whether including Level VII or just Level VI. Since the benefit of prophylactic CND that is confined to Level VI has not convincingly been shown to provide any reduction in local recurrence, why should a more extended dissection provide any benefit?

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.

No
Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
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No

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
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I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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