Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 1 Date: 20 Oct 2019

Reviewer: Thomas J. Fahey

Reviewer's report:

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The authors have demonstrated that they are able to do Level VII LN dissection very nicely. However, the ability to do it does not mean that one can conclude that it should be done. The authors clearly recommend that Level VII LN dissection should be done and provide no data that support better outcomes as a result of Level VII LN dissection. It is well known that Level VI LN metastases can be found in up to 50% of patients with PTC and yet studies have not demonstrated definitively that routine Level VI dissection leads to reduced recurrence or better survival. So, the conclusions must be modified or additional data accumulated documenting a recurrence or survival advantage for the addition of a Level VII dissection to routine surgery for PTC.

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?
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No

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

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