Reviewer's report

Title: Flexible ureteroscopy training for surgeons using isolated porcine kidneys in vitro

Version: 2  Date: 26 January 2015

Reviewer: Domenico Veneziano

Reviewer's report:

Dear Authors,

the paper is describing a potentially interesting training method for ureteroscopy. As described by the paper, using isolated porcine kidneys can be useful under several points of view, like costs, management of the organs and replicability. There are still some doubts about the paper itself, which I'll describe following:

Major Compulsory Revisions
- A picture of the setup is needed in order to better understand your idea. The paper is suggesting a new way of using porcine kidneys, therefore a detailed description is strongly suggested.

- A single kidney is usually moving a lot during ureteroscopy training procedures. Please describe how you managed to fix it during your sessions in order to make the model replicable and standardized.

- Line 107 describes a "supervised hands-on practice session", but no training curriculum is described. Did you have just one tutor per station? And in case not, did you standardize the instructions to be followed by the tutors?

- You are talking about pass/fail, but the pass/fail cut-offs are not clear. How did you objectively consider a task to be "passed"? Please also define the start/end of the task.

- In the Background part (line 71/72) you state that usually "flex ureteroscopy focuses on finding and locating renal calyces instead of on operating skills". From the paper it looks like you were considering just the ability of finding a stone inside a calyx. How did you train operating skills on your models?

Minor Essential Revisions
- On line 130 you say "(i.e. from easy to complicated)". Could you please explain better this concept?

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being
published

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests