Reviewer’s report

Title: Robot-assisted laparoscopic antegrade versus open inguinal lymphadenectomy: A retrospective controlled study

Version: 0 Date: 01 Apr 2019

Reviewer: Nick Watkin

Reviewer's report:

The authors have retrospectively compared a group of historical controls who underwent bilateral inguinal node dissection with a similar sized group who underwent Robotic assisted laparoscopic dissection. I have a number of comments and concerns:

1. There is no detail of the type of incision or surgical technique of the open group.
2. It is not clear if the Robotic data was collected as part of a prospective study
3. There is no detail in either group of the incidence of lymphocoele, lymphedema of the lower limbs or genitalia and medium to longer term incidence of cellulitis in either group.
4. There is no evidence of consent or ethics committee approval
5. There is no evidence on the training of the surgeon/surgeons who performed the procedures
6. The groups are small but probably sufficient for the robotic group to be considered as a point of technique
7. I do not think that the paper should attempt to compare with a small number of historical controls: it should restrict to the technique and a full inclusion of all complications not just skin related.

Please confirm that you have included your review in the ‘Comments to Author’ box?

As a minimum standard, please include a few sentences that outline what you think are the authors’ hypothesis/objectives, their main results, and the conclusions drawn. Your report should constructively instruct authors on how they can strengthen their paper to the point where it may be acceptable for publication, or provide detailed reasons as to why the manuscript does not fulfill our criteria for consideration. Please supply appropriate evidence using examples from the manuscript to substantiate your comments. Please break your comments into two bulleted or numbered sections: major and minor comments.

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Are the methods appropriate and well described to allow independent reproduction of experiments?

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Yes
Does the work include the necessary controls?
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No

Are you able to assess the statistics?
- Are the statistical test(s) used in this study appropriate and well described?
- Is the exact sample size (n) reported for each experimental group/condition (as a number, not a range)?
- Are the description of any error bars and probability values appropriate?
- Are all error bars defined in the corresponding figure legends?
- Has a sample size calculation been included, or a description and rationale about how sample sizes were chosen?

Please can you confirm which of the following statements apply to your statistical assessment of the manuscript (Please include details of what the authors need to address in the ‘Comments to Author’ box):

I have been able to assess all of the statistics in this manuscript (please refer to checklist above)

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
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NA

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