Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 1 Date: 22 Aug 2019

Reviewer: Nick Watkin

Reviewer's report:

The authors have answered my questions, but the responses raise more issues.

1. The type of surgical incision used (s shape) in the open group is notorious for wound breakdown. A supra-inguinal or sub-inguinal incision has a less than 5% risk of wound breakdown and would be a much more reasonable comparison with the robotic technique.

2. The authors state that their prior experience of robotic surgery was sufficient to start the inguinal node technique without mentoring of any sort. I do not think this would pass a UK ethical board.

3. The authors also confirm that data was retrospective even for the new technique. I find that disappointing (and certainly in the UK, prospective data would be mandatory for a new technique) given the lack of surgeon experience and the need to monitor for patient safety.

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

Yes

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

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?

No
If not, please explain in the ‘Comments to Author’ box below.

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?**
If not, please explain in the ‘Comments to Author’ box below.

No

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

Acceptable

**Should the manuscript be highlighted for promotional activity?**
Articles that are deemed of interest to a broad audience can be promoted in a variety of ways. This could be through email updates, postings on the BioMed Central homepage, social media, blogs and/or press releases. Please indicate in the text box below whether you think this manuscript should be considered for promotional activity, indicating your reasons why (e.g. what is the most newsworthy aspect of the research).

No

**Declaration of competing interests**
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the
4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

none

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal