Author’s response to reviews

Title: Perioperative routines and surgical techniques for saphenous vein harvesting in CABG surgery: a national cross-sectional study in Sweden.

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Reviewer reports:

Reviewer #2: The authors reported a national cross-sectional survey/web-based questionnaire for evaluation of perioperative hygiene and surgical techniques associated with saphenous vein harvesting in CABG. The questionnaire was sent to surgeons and OT nurses and around 50% of them have sent back their feedback. On this paper the authors have actually presented the results of this survey (percentages about disinfection/hygiene protocols and SVG harvesting methods across Sweden).

I would like to congratulate the authors about their effort of collecting and presenting the feedback from all Swedish centers. Their paper although lacks any association of these results with surgical site infection rates or with any postoperative morbidity/mortality. It would be more interesting if they could provide us with numbers about postoperative wound infections of their patients and suggest any changes (or not) in their practice.

Otherwise, their text is well written and overall the topic is well discussed.

Thank you for taking your time to review our manuscript. Your comments have served as a valuable input. We agree it would have been highly relevant and very interesting to present numbers of postoperative wound infections. In this web based questionnaire these data were not included. Comparing such data between the different cardiothoracic centres would first of all require a standardized definition of wound complications and secondly a uniform postoperative follow up among all centres in Sweden. Unfortunately, neither of these exist at the moment. However, there are ongoing multicenter trials involving all centres in Sweden, and especially one of them “SWEDEGRAFT” (NCT03501303) will collect standardized postoperative data on leg wound complications. Once this trial is finished (during 2020) we hope to be able to analyze the
outcomes regarding wound healing complications with respect to the differences between centres in perioperative hygiene and surgical techniques found in the present study.

In the discussion, we have added a suggestion regarding guidelines for changing gloves every 90 minutes during surgery.

Some minor changes that were made in the text are undertaken in yellow.