Author’s response to reviews

Title: Peroperative epicardial ultrasonography of distal coronary artery bypass graft anastomoses using a stabilizing device. A feasibility study.

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Version: 1 Date: 17 Dec 2019

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Answers to Reviewer reports:

Reviewer #1: This paper may be an interesting study describing how to check the passage of the anastomosis after graft anastomosis in coronary artery bypass graft. However, the lengthy, unstructured English language makes it difficult to understand the full text. Authors should reconstruct this paper by leaving the paper to English experts.
Answer: The revised article has now been edited by a native English speaking reviewer: (American Journal Experts (AJE) https://www.aje.com). A certificate was issued on December 9, 2019 and may be verified on the AJE website using the verification code DF11-FA58-9C5D-C0AB-C4EC.

Reviewer #2: Dear authors,
Thank you very much for that very interesting manuscript. Here are my remarks.
Check grammar and spelling. Answer: Language editing has been performed as mentioned above.
Revise figures. Answer: Text has been added in Fig 4 (Previous Fig 3). We are satisfied with the other figures.
I sertan or picture or a video. Answer: A picture (new Figure 2) showing the Echoclip device in use has been added and referred to in line 156.
Compare to flow measurement (as guidelines suggest) Compare otcome to standard therapy.
Answer: The primary aim of our study was to evaluate the feasibility of the Echoclip device and we did not perform measurements to evaluate TTFM results in relation to clinical outcomes in the present study in order to compare with standard therapy. In order to report some TTFM results we have added some text in relation to the TTFM performed (Lines 251,253,260)

Reviewer #3: Congratulation on a well written article.
Here are a few comments:

1) How did you come up with a number of 15 cases for the learning curve?
Answer: We have added some text in the manuscript (Line 236-7): The learning curve in order to obtain images from anastomoses in different graft compositions involved approximately 15 patients as imaging became easier, faster and more precise after approximately 15 patients.

2) What would be the next research questions to be explored going forward with this device?
Answer: We have removed some text from the conclusion regarding future studies to the end of the discussion. The following text can now to be seen at the end of the discussion section (Lines 383-8):

Future studies on the Echoclip device will be conduct to perform blinded comparisons of UL images obtained from the same anastomosis with and without use of the device using algorithms for automatic estimation [18] of the anastomotic quality. Furthermore, the Echoclip device will be tested during off-pump surgery. An ultrasound gel to be approved for application in the pericardial space should be developed, and we also intend to obtain a CE marking (Conformité Européenne) for the Echoclip device as a symbol of free marketability in the European Economic Area.

Additional:
We have added information regarding the abbreviation used in the Tables under Table 1 and 2.

Furthermore, we have tried to correct references 4,11,12 and 13 as these were note validated. Reference13 has been corrected and is validated, but we really do not understand why ref 4, 11 and 12 are not validated. It seems as if Pubmed does not accept the correct citations. We can find them looking up the names of the authors indication that we are citing the references correctly.