Author's response to reviews

Title: A feasibility study of 60 consecutive patients operated for unstable thoracic cage compared to historical controls treated in a mechanical ventilator

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Cover letter

A feasibility study of 60 consecutive patients operated ..................

About 10 % of adult patients in high-energy trauma sustain multiple rib fractures. Some of these patients suffer from flail chest leading to respiratory insufficiency. The literature today all show positive results for surgical versus conservative treatment, specifically with regard to time spent in mechanical ventilator, complication rates and length of hospital stay. To conduct a prospective randomized study on this topic is extremely difficult due to all parameters that cannot be controlled. To use historical controls is therefore frequently used in trauma research. Our controls are from the same hospital, same area and as close in time as possible. The control series is also consecutive within our criteria.

Our series of 60 patients treated in the same manner and with same implants, with no dropouts and from the start of this treatment protocol is probably so far the largest one published.

This is a short time study, with no late follow up but it still proves that we have very few complications, it is a safe procedure and the time spent in mechanical ventilator is significantly shortened.

We will follow this series prospectively and come back with a one year report later on. We are also following the physical function on some of these patients. We have published the first paper on this subject last year.(1) Based on these facts we think that this paper should be published.


Göteborg
30 January 2014
Hans Granhed
Answer to Reviewer's report

Reviewer number: 1
Please explain prophylactic antibiotics are administered.

Page 2

Prophylactic antibiotics were admitted in all patients, starting at least 30 minutes before surgery, until the drains were extracted on day three or four. If no signs or symptoms of infection standard cloxacillin was used.

Reviewer number: 2
Reviewer's report:
Major
reorganize the manuscript according to general standards
adress the suggested corrections.

I have not found any suggested corrections and can not see what could be so terribly wrong.' I have in a former revision published most patient information in "Patients and methods". The “Results” in that version only included the outcome of the intervention. Then I was told do change to this version.

Can You please tell me in what way I can correct this article to be in line with your standards.