Reviewer’s report

Title: Electroacupuncture for postoperative pain and gastrointestinal motility after laparoscopic appendectomy (AcuLap trial): study protocol for a prospective randomized controlled trial with three-arm, parallel-group (electroacupuncture versus sham acupuncture versus control)

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Reviewer: Fan-Rong Liang

Reviewer’s report:

The authors designed an interesting randomized controlled study to investigate the efficacy of EA for postoperative pain and gastrointestinal motility after laparoscopic appendectomy. However, the authors should consider the following comments for the improvement of the manuscript before resubmission.

1. In the intervention group I, about electroacupuncture treatment, firstly, how did you set the frequency as twice a day, and a maximum of 4 session of acupuncture treatment were given? Was there any evidence to supported? Or there were other reasons can you specify please? Secondly, since it is the disorder of gastrointestinal, why the acupoints on the stomach meridian (ST36, ST37, ST39 et al.) or spleen meridian were not selected? Thirdly, the EA versus sham acupuncture, park sham device was used to resemble acupuncture, how about the electric stimulation?

2. In the control group, patients were given routine standard postoperative care, it was a positive control or blank control? In the sham group, they were not given routine standard postoperative care, whether it was ethical or not.

3. About the timeline, the quality of life, readmission, medical costs and protocol failure will be assessed on the first visit day after discharge, when is the first visit?

4. As for the statistical methods, what would you do to handle the missing data?

5. In the discussion part, would you please add the strength and limitation of your study protocol?