Dear Editor,

Thank you very much for your suggestions. We have accepted the reviewers' suggestions and revised our manuscript thoroughly and carefully. Changes to the text are indicated with yellow highlight. Followings are the answers to reviewers' questions.
Reviewer Comments

Reviewer #1:

The tense of the text changes throughout (from future to past back to future) and may need addressing.

otherwise, the protocol is well written, with sufficient details included for full description of methodology.

Answer/Explanation

Thank you for your suggestion. According to your suggestion, we have checked the tense of the text carefully and corrected it throughout the full manuscript. Please see the revision in the following paragraphs with yellow highlight and red colour words:

1. “Standard Oesophagectomy” part in “Interventions” session;
2. “Radiotherapy” part in “Interventions” session;
3. “Follow-up” part in “Interventions” session;
4. “Sample Size Estimation and Statistical Analysis” part in “Interventions” session;

Reviewer #2:

1. It is not recommended to perform significance testing to compare treatment arms at baseline. Please consider removing this from your planned analysis.

Answer/Explanation

Thank you for your suggestion. The description of “significance testing to compare treatment arms at baseline” has been removed from the first sentence of the second paragraph of Sample Size Estimation and Statistical Analysis session.

2. It is misleading to state that your analysis will only be descriptive due to the number of participants and then later describe conducting significance testing at follow-up. Please revise this.

Answer/Explanation
Thank you for your advice. We have removed this improper state from Data Analysis part and given a more detailed description with yellow highlight.

3. When describing doing t-tests, please replace 'parametric' with 'normally distributed'. Parametric refers to the type of analysis performed, not the properties of the data.

Answer/Explanation

Thank you for your instruction. We have replaced 'parametric' with 'normally distributed' in the first sentence of the second paragraph of Sample Size Estimation and Statistical Analysis session with yellow highlight.

4. How will missing data be handled for the QoL outcome?

Answer/Explanation

Firstly, some measures will be taken to prevent and reduce the missing data through enhancing the investigator training, communication, patient education and data monitoring. Secondly, we will confirm the causes of missing data case by case and record in detail. Then the suitable missing data handling methods such as last observation carried forward (LOCF) or multiple imputation (MI) will be chosen at last. We described this question in the last paragraph of Monitoring session, Collecting, assessing, reporting and managing adverse events part with yellow highlight.

Thank you again for your kind help. Hope our revised manuscript is now publishable. Do not hesitate to contact me if you have any more questions.

Yours sincerely,

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