Reviewer’s report

Title: A randomised controlled feasibility trial to evaluate local heat preconditioning on wound healing after reconstructive breast surgery: the preHEAT trial

Version: 0 Date: 02 Aug 2018

Reviewer: Ari Nareg Meguerditchian

Reviewer's report:

Thank you very much or giving me the opportunity to review this manuscript.

The topic of optimizing surgical outcomes in patients opting for breast reconstruction is important, not only for cost considerations, but also because of the psychological impact of sub-optimal reconstructions. In addition, I appreciate the objective, structured fashion with which the authors have set up and are developing surgical technique-related research.

I have a few concerns:

- I wonder if there are too many objectives. What is the net goal of the paper? I sit to get the groundwork and necessary data to then set up the larger trial? Why such a large number of secondary objectives that cover a broad range of unrelated issues? how were these chosen?

- How long before surgery were the patients asked to start heat application?

- Do we know how adherent they were (frequency, length of time for heat application, consistency in achieving and maintaining 43 degrees, etc.)?

- Do you have a definition of necrosis that was used by your assessors to then give a yes/no assessment? Were the assessors standardized within themselves and consistent? Was there any pre-trial training done to the assessors on this?

- I don't see any clear and objective assessment of cosmetic outcomes.

- Is the 30% flap necrosis rate in line with published data on this?

- Can you explain the 5 days of length of stay? Seems a bit long.

- Did you explore an important patient-centered outcome: pain/discomfort at heat pad application and after surgery?
Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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