

Reviewer Assessment

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Robotic colorectal surgery: more than a fantastic toy?

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Reviewers' Comments to Original Submission

Reviewer 1: anonymous

Dec 11, 2017

Reviewer Recommendation Term:	Reject
Overall Reviewer Manuscript Rating:	N/A
Custom Review Questions	Response
Is the subject area appropriate for you?	5 - High/Yes
Does the title clearly reflect the paper's content?	3
Does the abstract clearly reflect the paper's content?	1 - Low/No
Do the keywords clearly reflect the paper's content?	2
Does the introduction present the problem clearly?	1 - Low/No
Are the results/conclusions justified?	1 - Low/No
How comprehensive and up-to-date is the subject matter presented?	2
How adequate is the data presentation?	1 - Low/No
Are units and terminology used correctly?	3
Is the number of cases adequate?	1 - Low/No
Are the experimental methods/clinical studies adequate?	1 - Low/No
Is the length appropriate in relation to the content?	1 - Low/No
Does the reader get new insights from the article?	1 - Low/No
Please rate the practical significance.	2
Please rate the accuracy of methods.	1 - Low/No
Please rate the statistical evaluation and quality control.	1 - Low/No
Please rate the appropriateness of the figures and tables.	1 - Low/No
Please rate the appropriateness of the references.	2
Please evaluate the writing style and use of language.	3
Please judge the overall scientific quality of the manuscript.	1 - Low/No
Are you willing to review the revision of this manuscript?	No

Comments to Authors:

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Additional Comments from Reviewer 1

This article certainly breathes the best spirit of surgery: To move forward what is considered to be reasonable and to fight intensively what is thought to be progress.

In this paper, the authors argue with a vengeance in favor of colorectal robotic surgery.

Currently, we are within an intensive, and sometimes even passionate, debate upon the role of “robotic surgery”. In a sober, critical analysis of the flood of reports, meta-analyses and even prospective randomized trials no other conclusion is left than robotic surgery being feasible but not superior.

The authors’ opinion is different. After a general analysis of the literature which fails to prove the necessity to use telemanipulation systems, he is nonetheless convinced that the use of a telemanipulation system is justified in “difficult” colorectal cases. A logical consequence of this statement would be “to reserve robotic technology only for complex cases” as he points out explicitly. This, however, is denied since “normal” cases are required to achieve and maintain a high training level with the device. This might be an acceptable point of view but it implicitly means that telemanipulation systems are only adequate in specialized centers with a high caseload of complex interventions. This important conclusion should be stated clearly.

Reviewer 2: Roland Croner

Dec 27, 2017

Reviewer Recommendation Term:	Revise with Mino Modification
Overall Reviewer Manuscript Rating:	N/A
Custom Review Questions	Response
Is the subject area appropriate for you?	3
Does the title clearly reflect the paper’s content?	4
Does the abstract clearly reflect the paper’s content?	4
Do the keywords clearly reflect the paper’s content?	5 - High/Yes
Does the introduction present the problem clearly?	4
Are the results/conclusions justified?	5 - High/Yes
How comprehensive and up-to-date is the subject matter presented?	5 - High/Yes
How adequate is the data presentation?	5 - High/Yes
Are units and terminology used correctly?	5 - High/Yes
Is the number of cases adequate?	4
Are the experimental methods/clinical studies adequate?	4
Is the length appropriate in relation to the content?	3
Does the reader get new insights from the article?	5 - High/Yes
Please rate the practical significance.	5 - High/Yes
Please rate the accuracy of methods.	4
Please rate the statistical evaluation and quality control.	4
Please rate the appropriateness of the figures and tables.	5 - High/Yes
Please rate the appropriateness of the references.	5 - High/Yes
Please evaluate the writing style and use of language.	4
Please judge the overall scientific quality of the manuscript.	5 - High/Yes
Are you willing to review the revision of this manuscript?	Yes

Comments to Authors:

Very well written paper on robotic surgery and the development of robotic-assisted rectal surgery over the last years. The endpoints of the manuscript concerning the use of robotic surgery are well demonstrated.

Minor concerns:

1. The authors could mention the longer operating times (in comparison to laparoscopic surgery) at the beginning of the learning curve.
2. Do the authors not see any benefit (in comparison to laparoscopic surgery) by the use of robotic surgery in cases of right/sided carcinomas in terms of CME, technical feasibility and quality of specimen?

Reviewer 3: anonymous

Jan 30, 2018

Reviewer Recommendation Term:	Accept
Overall Reviewer Manuscript Rating:	40
Custom Review Questions	Response
Is the subject area appropriate for you?	5 - High/Yes
Does the title clearly reflect the paper's content?	4
Does the abstract clearly reflect the paper's content?	3
Do the keywords clearly reflect the paper's content?	3
Does the introduction present the problem clearly?	4
Are the results/conclusions justified?	2
How comprehensive and up-to-date is the subject matter presented?	4
How adequate is the data presentation?	N/A
Are units and terminology used correctly?	N/A
Is the number of cases adequate?	N/A
Are the experimental methods/clinical studies adequate?	N/A
Is the length appropriate in relation to the content?	4
Does the reader get new insights from the article?	3
Please rate the practical significance.	3
Please rate the accuracy of methods.	N/A
Please rate the statistical evaluation and quality control.	N/A
Please rate the appropriateness of the figures and tables.	3
Please rate the appropriateness of the references.	3
Please evaluate the writing style and use of language.	3
Please judge the overall scientific quality of the manuscript.	3
Are you willing to review the revision of this manuscript?	No: Since the article is classified as "Opinion Paper" and therefore clearly reflects the authors' opinion I feel that a revision is not necessary.

Comments to Authors:

As the authors correctly state: there is huge evidence of increasing importance of robotic surgery not only in General, but also in urologic and gynecologic. Up till now, however, there is no existing evidence that robotic surgery really is better than laparoscopic surgery. For these reasons, it is absolutely the authors' opinion that robotic surgery is more than a fantastic toy. The Readers of this article must be aware of this fact.

Authors' Response to Reviewer Comments

Feb 08, 2018

Thank you for your comments. We have addressed all of the reviewers' comments and made the minor corrections as requested.

Reviewers' comments:

Reviewer #2: Very well written paper on robotic surgery and the development of robotic-assisted rectal surgery over the last years. The end-points of the manuscript concerning the use of robotic surgery are well demonstrated.

Minor concerns:

1. The authors could mention the longer operating times (in comparison to laparoscopic surgery) at the beginning of the learning curve.

Done

2. Do the authors not see any benefit (in comparison to laparoscopic surgery) by the use of robotic surgery in cases of right/sided carcinomas in terms of CME, technical feasibility and quality of specimen?

We do not believe there is a major benefit for robotics in right sided colon cancer surgery.

Br J Surg (2012) Randomized clinical trial of robot-assisted versus standard laparoscopic right colectomy. Park JS1, Choi GS, Park SY, Kim HJ,

Ryuk JP concluded that ‘robotic-assisted laparoscopic right hemicolectomy was feasible but provided no benefit to justify the greater cost.’

Reviewer #3: As the authors correctly state: there is huge evidence of increasing importance of robotic surgery not only in General, but also in urologic and gynecologic. Up till now, however, there is no existing evidence that robotic surgery really is better than laparoscopic surgery. For these reasons, it is absolutely the authors’ opinion that robotic surgery is more than a fantastic toy. The Readers of this article must be aware of this fact.

This is incorrect - it is not just our opinion that robotic surgery has benefit (we have provided evidence from several meta-analyses of benefit). Secondly, in this opinion paper, we have not stated that there is ‘huge evidence of increasing importance’ in robotic surgery. Albeit there is evidence in the literature that robotic surgery provides benefit in rectal cancer surgery. These meta-analyses which we have mentioned in our article have shown reduced conversion to open in rectal cancer surgery and improved short term outcomes.

Ortiz-Oshiro E, Sanchez-Egido I, Moreno-Sierra J, Perez CF, Diaz JS, Fernandez-Represa JA. Robotic assistance may reduce conversion to open in rectal carcinoma laparoscopic surgery: systematic review and meta-analysis. The international journal of medical robotics + computer assisted surgery : MRCAS. 2012;8:360-370. Sun Y, Xu H, Li Z, et al. Robotic versus laparoscopic low anterior resection for rectal cancer: a meta-analysis. World Journal of Surgical Oncology. 2016;14:61.

Reviewers’ Comments to Revision

Reviewer 2: Roland Croner

Mar 06, 2018

Reviewer Recommendation Term:	Accept
Overall Reviewer Manuscript Rating:	70
Custom Review Questions	Response
Is the subject area appropriate for you?	5 - High/Yes
Does the title clearly reflect the paper’s content?	5 - High/Yes
Does the abstract clearly reflect the paper’s content?	4
Do the keywords clearly reflect the paper’s content?	5 - High/Yes
Does the introduction present the problem clearly?	5 - High/Yes
Are the results/conclusions justified?	5 - High/Yes
How comprehensive and up-to-date is the subject matter presented?	4
How adequate is the data presentation?	3
Are units and terminology used correctly?	5 - High/Yes
Is the number of cases adequate?	4
Are the experimental methods/clinical studies adequate?	5 - High/Yes
Is the length appropriate in relation to the content?	4
Does the reader get new insights from the article?	5 - High/Yes
Please rate the practical significance.	5 - High/Yes
Please rate the accuracy of methods.	5 - High/Yes
Please rate the statistical evaluation and quality control.	3
Please rate the appropriateness of the figures and tables.	3
Please rate the appropriateness of the references.	5 - High/Yes
Please evaluate the writing style and use of language.	5 - High/Yes
Please judge the overall scientific quality of the manuscript.	5 - High/Yes
Are you willing to review the revision of this manuscript?	Yes

Comments to Authors:

The authors addressed the reviewer’s concerns adequately. All necessary changes have been carried out. The manuscript should be published in the present form.