

Peer Review File

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Reviewer A

This is a well-written review article with a fairly complete literature discussion for the major publications within the last two decades regarding minimally invasive surgery, and more specifically, robotic surgery for rectal cancer. The article weighs some of the salient points from several classic papers on this topic. Overall, I find it to be a good summary of current literature with merits for surgeon education. However, there was one major section of rectal cancer management as it pertains to robotic surgery that appears to be missing (listed below). I think a discussion of rectal cancer is not complete until this is addressed.

1. The article does not discuss Trans-anal minimally surgery (TAMIS) or robotic-TAMIS (RTAMIS) which has become an increasing popular approach for T1 rectal cancer. The robotic platform offers potentially organ preserving curative resections of these rectal cancer that is often not possible to accomplish through open techniques. It would greatly improve the completeness of discussion on this topic.

Reply: Thank you for your suggestion. We have added a section including some of the published literature comparing laparoscopic vs robotic TAMIS approaches to rectal polyps and early rectal cancers to the manuscript. See page 21 Lines 421-433.

2. I recommend the section titled “FEASIBILITY OF MINIMALLY INVASIVE SURGERY IN RECTAL CANCER” be changed to be a discussion only limiting to conventional laparoscopic approaches. Given the distinction that occurs later to single out robotic surgery, it is fairer to say this section (and all literature quoted here) relates only to laparoscopic assisted approaches.

Reply: Thank you for this suggestion. We have renamed this section “Assimilating Laparoscopic Techniques in Rectal Cancer Surgery” and shifted the focus to laparoscopic surgery and whether it is oncologically sound as compared to open surgery. See page 6 Lines 100 – 152.

Reviewer B

Thanks for your hard work in writing I think on balance it is a publishable piece of work which adds updates to the subject despite previous authors attempts, I had small comments that I have attached. Also, I was wishing to see some figures or tables of comparison of the literature but this in my opinion should not be an obstacle to acceptance.

Reply: Thank you for your comments and taking the time to review our manuscript.