

## Peer Review File

Article information: <https://dx.doi.org/10.21037/jgo-23-402>

### Reviewer A

There are few major concerns.

1. How is TF-DRE different from DRE? Any standard DRE uses two fingers only

Reply: Thank you for your comments. In clinical practice, doctors often use only one finger to do DRE, which is different from TF-DRE.

2. Why was MRI not used for comparison when MRI is better than USG for deep tracts especially the ones in which DRE is also ineffective

Reply: Thank you for your comments. First, MRI examination is expensive. Second, since fistula is not a vessel-like channel, it is often difficult for MRI to discriminate the lesions from normal tissue.

3. The primary parameter is - "The primary endpoint is the accuracy of the diagnosis of anal fistula.". But its not mentioned as what all points or parameters would be evaluated while calculating accuracy

Reply: Thank you for your comments. We stated this in the section of statistical analysis.

### Reviewer B

The concept of this paper is very interesting. It is expected to make a significant contribution to improving the outcome of anal fistula surgery. I should be grateful if you could consider my comments shown below when you revise your paper.

Minor points

Title:

The number at the beginning of the sentence should be spelled out, so it is better to change it as follows:

Two-finger digital rectal examination for the diagnosis of anal fistula: protocol for a randomized controlled trial

Text:

Numbers less than 10 in the sentence should also be spelled out, so spell out the numbers in lines 31, 52, 68, 77, 89, 146, 153, 154, 174, 217, and 310.

Reply: Thank you very much. We revised these numbers according to your comments.

## Reviewer C

1. Please kindly provide the full name of “ASL BAT” if applicable.

14 Brazil; <sup>5</sup>Department of Surgery and Traumatology, ASL BAT, Andria, Italy,

Reply: In most published literatures, ASL BAT is preferred. Thanks.

2. The study has got approval from your hospital’s ethics committee, please kindly indicate the **approval number/ID** in your manuscript.

approved by the Ethical Committee of the China-Japan Friendship Hospital. Informed

Reply: We added the approval number in the text. Thanks.