

## Peer Review File

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### Reviewer A

The authors are to be congratulated for reporting their important experience. However, there are a number of issues that need to be addressed.

1) Some basic information (such as gender, disease stage, adjuvant chemotherapy) between the two groups were not balanced which would result in bias for the study and attenuate the reliability of the conclusion. Therefore, I suggested the author to have an analysis of propensity score matching and then redo the statistical comparison.

**Response:** In the original submission edition, we have presented and compared the baseline characteristics of patients, such as gender, adjuvant chemotherapy, all with the  $P > 0.05$  (please check Table 1). Therefore, the clinical parameters were comparable between surgery group and radiotherapy group. Thank you for your comments.

2) What was the protocol of neoadjuvant chemotherapy and adjuvant chemotherapy? Please add it in the manuscript.

**Response:** We have revised the text as suggested (see page 5, line 148). The chemotherapy regimen was platinum-based single-agent or combination chemotherapy, with platinum-based drugs such as cisplatin, carboplatin, nedaplatin and loplatin, and combination drugs including paclitaxel, gemcitabine, docetaxel and vincristine.

3) What was the definition of "Disease stage"? Clinical stage or Pathological stage?

**Response:** Clinical stage

4) What was the Histological type of the cancers in this study ? Please add it in the manuscript.

**Response:** We have revised the text as suggested (see page 4, line 115). The squamous lung cancer

5) What was the time interval for the cases included in the study? Please add it in the manuscript.

**Response:** We have revised the text as suggested (see page 4, line 115). Patients who underwent therapy in the Fourth Hospital of Hebei Medical University from January 2008 to December 2013 were selected.

### Reviewer B

1. The expressions "1/2" in line 35 and "1 and 2" in line 142 are different and need to be

standardized.

**Response:** We have revised the text as suggested (see page 1, line 49). These two places had been changed into "1 and 2".

2. The content from line 50 to 52 belongs to the background category and does not describe any key findings.

**Response:** We have revised the text as suggested (see page 3, line 72). This study found that Surgery improved OS in this population, which is a better choice.

3. In line 100, the criterion "(IV) patients who had not undergone any surgery, pneumonectomy, or lobectomy" excludes patients with a surgical history, which may be too strict. Furthermore, this criterion should be included in the exclusion criteria.

**Response:** We have revised the text as suggested (see page 5, line 133). We have corrected the description of criteria IV and moved to the exclusion criteria section. Thank you.

4. In line 101, the criterion "(I) patients who previously received adjuvant targeted treatment" should exclude patients who received adjuvant chemotherapy and radiation therapy, not just targeted therapy.

**Response:** We have revised the text as suggested (see page 4, line 131). We have corrected the description in the revised manuscript. Thank you.

5. In line 147, the sample size is too small to have significant comparative value. Instead of comparing preoperative comorbidities, the focus should be on postoperative complications, as preoperative comorbidities may have already introduced selection bias during grouping.

**Response:** Actually, we have analyzed the post-operative comorbidities in patients between two groups. In the Table 3, we analyzed the diabetes and hypertension of patients between Surgery group and radiotherapy group. Moreover, we must acknowledge that the sample size of patients in this is relatively small, which has been discussed as a limitation in the "Discussion" part of the revised manuscript. Thank you.

6. There is a formatting issue in line 167.

**Response:** We have revised the text as suggested (see page 7, line 215). The formatting issue has been corrected. Thank you.

7. In line 282, Table 2 only shows one p-value, and the meaning of the p-value is not clearly expressed in table.

**Response:** In this study, the Chi-square test was applied to analyze the disease (IIIa and IIIb) between the surgery and the radiotherapy groups. And the Chi-square test was used to compare the component ratio between two groups. Therefore, only one p value was expressed in Table 2.

8.The language of the article needs further editing and improvement.

**Response:** The language has been corrected. Thank you.