Peer Review File

Reviewer A

1. Your work is interesting and contributes to decision making for the management of early rectal cancer. The small number of patients with colon cancer (N=8) undergoing CRT does not justify any conclusions. This also explains your finding that tumor location in the rectum benefits from CRT. I would suggest that you separate your analysis between patients with rectal and colonic cancer to make your findings more reliable.

Reply: Thank you very much for your helpful advice. We removed the 8 patients with colon cancer and re-analyzed the OS and CSS rates between ER and ER+CRT groups. The results were similar (Page 8, Line 161-163). We have provided the data as supplementary Figure 1 in the revised manuscript.

2. The manuscript also needs a thorough review of the English language – there are numerous grammatical errors and missing words in the manuscript. The Results section is too long and needs revision as well.

Reply: Thank you very much for your wonderful suggestion. We have revised the language and result section in the revised manuscript.

Thank you very much again for your help in improving our manuscript quality.

Reviewer B

1. A brief introduction to the study background must be added in the "Background" section.

Response: We have revised the abstract section accordingly.

2. You refer to "studies" but have only one citation in the sentence: "Despite numerous studies, it remains unclear why colon cancer outcomes differ from those of the rectum [20]."

Response: We have revised in the manuscript.

3. Add the title/unit of the Y-axis in Figure 2. The chart and table in Figure 2 should both be independent and cannot share the same X-axis.

Response: We have revised Figure 2 accordingly.

4. This should be 2011-2018 according to Figure 2.

180   2010-2018 (p=0.192). The overall rate of patients who underwent ER+CRT and ER in

5. Capitalize "colon" in Figure 4.

6. Words are not showing completed in Figure 4B.

Hazard Ratio(95%C

7. The color yellow in Figure 5 is hard to read. Please update the figure.

8. There are 2 rows of "≥65" in Table 2.

Age at diagnosis (y)			0.190
<65	37 (54.4)	31 (45.6)	
≥65	45 (44.1)	57 (55.9)	
≥65	16 (61.5)	10 (38.5)	

9. Numbers in Table 2 do not add up.

Histological grade			0.04
Grade I-II	92 (52.9)	88 (47.1)	
Grade IV	6 (27.3)	16 (72.7)	

10. Data is missing in Table 2 and 3.

Stage			0.118
0	1 (16.7)	5 (83.3)	
1	97 (51.3)	92 (48.7)	
2	0	1 (100)	
3			

Stage										
0			Ref							
1	0.394 (0.123-1.265)	0.118	0.604 (0.223-1.641)	0.323	0.027 (0.003-0.253)	0.002	0.606 (0.216-1.697)	0.340	
2	3.816 (0.387-37.670)	0.252	3.212 (0.353-29.204)	0.300	NA	NA	13.073 (1.310-130.438)	0.029	
3			-	-					

11. Provide figure captions for subfigures S1A-B, S2A-D, S3A-D, and S4A-D.

12. Change ≤2 cm to <2 cm in Figure S2.

13. The categories should be <2 cm and 2-5 cm in Table 2.

Tumor Size			0.122
<3cm	50 (47.2)	56 (52.8)	
3-5cm	48 (55.2)	39 (44.8)	
>5 cm	0	3 (100)	

14. Confirm whether this should be "of".

Response 4-14: Thank you very much for your helpful suggestions. We have revised according to your suggestions.