OPEN PEER REVIEW

Open Peer Review (OPR)

As a new feature for progressing towards transparency, we decided to open a new window for all of our editors as well as authors titled "**Open Peer Review**". We hope by this new facility, our reviewers will be more motivated and authors will be more satisfied with the review process. We believe that publishing our peer review reports could make a transparent and clear environment for all our efforts within a journal, but not all reviewers tend to publish their comments.

What is "Open Peer Review" process?

An "Open Peer Review" process is making the details of all review process (including reviewers, associate editors, and EICs comments) as "Public" as it is agreed by EIC, Authors, and reviewers.

Advantages of "Open Peer Review" process

- More transparency, constructiveness and tactful comments of the peer review process: leads to an increase in the quality of reviews
- More motivations for all involved roles in the review process
- Authors' satisfactions from the review process: Increases honesty between authors and reviewers
- Education of both authors and new students
- Prevents reviewers from following their individual agendas and leading to the detection of reviewers' conflicts of interests

You can find out more at:
https://brieflands.com/briefland/knowledgebase/category/tree.html#opr.html

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Peer Review Report for "Prevalence of Hepatic Space-Occupying Lesions Based on Sonographic Findings in Patients Referred to Guilan Cohort Center, Iran"

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Review Timeline:

Submit Date: 8 Jun 2022
Revised Date: 23 Jul 2022
Accepted Date: 24 Jul 2022

Revision (0)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (0) 28 Jun 2022

Dear Associate Editor
Thank you for sending me the article entitled "Investigating the Prevalence of Hepatic Space-Occupying Lesions Based on Sonographic Findings in Patients Referred to Guilan Cohort Center, Iran' for review. This cross sectional study evaluated the frequency of hepatic lesions detected by trans-abdominal ultrasound. They found that hemangioma were the most common lesion found in this survey. Moreover, the frequency of liver lesions were more in women that men. There are some comments as the followings:
1-I did not found any rational for detecting hepatic lesions in general population by ultrasonography. Although the Ethical committee of the university found it in line with medical Ethics!!!
2-Please refer to the aim of study at the introduction section.
3-Please define if any sample size calculation was performed.

4-Please define if only one radiologist performed the trans-abdominal ultrasonography. Were inter-observer variability in detecting hepatic lesions exists in this project?
5-Why patients with acute viral hepatitis, known hepatic diseases, or pregnancy were excluded from the study?
6-Please define the criteria for diagnosing hemangioma based on ultrasonography in this study. Was any hyperechoic lesion detected by ultrasonography diagnosed as hemangioma?
7-What about the diagnosis of fatty sparing in these subjects. Was this situation examined in the project? What about cirrhosis detection?
8-Please define the flow chart of participants. What was the participation rate?
9-Please define the main findings of the research in the first paragraph of discussion.
10-What was the new message in this project? Is application of liver ultrasonography in general population recommended? or it should be done in high risk group patients?

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision (0)** 2 Jul 2022

First of all I should congratulate you for this article with interesting topic. It would be interesting to determine the Prevalence of Hepatic Space-Occupying Lesions Based on Sonographic especially among people in Guilan province.
However, the manuscript needs to be revised in terms of introduction, methodological details, results, and language.
Introduction:
1- At the end of introduction it is not clear that what is exactly your goal for doing this research? (What problems have led you to plan this research?)
2- So you have not mentioned whether or not it has been done like similar research in other states? What ist the prevalence in other states and have we also the prevalence of Iran?

Method:
1-You have not reported on the use of drugs in patients and drug history
Such of drugs that can produce various lesions and influence in the production of the lesions but you didn't mention. Please tell us about medication history of participants.
2-Were there any limitations in your study (patient admission or...)

Result:
1- Please explain each part of the result in the different sections
2- Please mention all of the comparison in your result (relationship between sex and lesion, or Comparison between contraceptive and rate of lesion incidence in women?

Discussion:
Should be thoroughly revised, needs language revision
1-please more detail about the importance of conducting this study among Iranians, Reasons and comparison with similar studies.
2-Are there any studies that have been conducted in a particular country or Nations? Comparing with your data, are there any differences or similar? Because your patients are Iranian and you should better compare your data with those of other nations
Reference:

The references are outdated; please use more current references for the article, especially for the discussion section.

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (0) 3 Jul 2022

Dear Editor in Chief
Thanks for assigning me as associate editor to handle the manuscript NO.127545 entitled "Investigating the Prevalence of Hepatic Space-Occupying Lesions Based on Sonographic Findings in Patients Referred to Guilan Cohort Center, Iran".
I appreciate the authors' work to collect these important data and to write its manuscript. The subject is novel and the methodology seems correct. There are some concerns regarding the scientific writing of the manuscript that should be addressed by the authors before being published. See the peer-review comments attached.

Also, I suggest that the authors use subheadings with proper numbering (2.1., 2.2., 2.3.,.. 3.1., 3.2.,...) for both methods and results sections.
Moreover, the methods section needs further explanations. Please provide an "Ethical considerations" section in your methods. And, the statistical analyses needs further details (e.g. the test used to check the normality of distributions, the univariate tests, etc.).
Some references are not valid. Please replace the references before 2000 and make sure that the references style is according to the journal's instructions.
Also, please use some recent studies (2020-2022) to complete both introduction and discussion sections.
In the results section and the tables, please use three decimals for all P-value amounts (e.g. P=0.051).

Regards
AE

Seyed Moayed Alavian: EIC | **Revision** (0) 3 Jul 2022

Dear Authors,

Thank you for your submission. Please follow the peer-review comments and submit a revision.

Regards
EIC

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (1)

Reply to Reviewers

Ideally, the reviewing process can significantly improve the submitted manuscripts by allowing the authors to take into account the advice of reviewers. Author(s) must reply to all reviewers' comments in a separate Word file, point by point. A "**Reply to Reviewers**" document is submitted along with revised manuscript during submission of revised files, summarizing the changes that the authors made in response to the reviewers' comments. The responses to reviewers' comments specifies how the authors addressed each comment the reviewers made.

You can read the authors' responses to the reviewers' comments in the next page.

Dear Editor in Chief

Many thanks for your revision and comments. Also great thanks to the reviewers' comments and their helps. Our point to point responses to the reviewers and the revised manuscript which is highlighted in revised parts are attached. We hope this could be enough to cover all the comments. Anyway, we would be grateful if you let us know about any further changes required.

Yours Sincerely

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Dear Reviewer 1

Thank you for your comments. All comments were applied and highlighted in the manuscript.

1-I did not found any rational for detecting hepatic lesions in general population by ultrasonography. Although the Ethical committee of the university found it in line with medical Ethics!!!

The aim of this study was to find out liver lesions in individuals with fatty liver after sonography who are not aware of their diseases. The frequency of liver lesions was 2.3% in the study population. So, performing sonography in general population is not necessary unless in the case of disruptive in liver enzyme.

2-Please refer to the aim of study at the introduction section.

The required data were added and highlighted

3-Please define if any sample size calculation was performed.

By considering the error limit of relative estimation of 10% and with 95% confidence, the frequency was determined as 957 individuals according to sampling formula.

4-Please define if only one radiologist performed the trans-abdominal ultrasonography. Was inter-observer variability in detecting hepatic lesions exists in this project?

Kappa value was used between two radiologists to estimate overall agreement.

5-Why patients with acute viral hepatitis, known hepatic diseases, or pregnancy were excluded from the study?

The aim of this study was to evaluate the prevalence of liver lesions in individuals without any liver related complications.

6-Please define the criteria for diagnosing hemangioma based on ultrasonography in this study. Was any hyperechoic lesion detected by ultrasonography diagnosed as hemangioma?

Due to the easy access and non-invasive method of sonography.

7-What about the diagnosis of fatty sparing in these subjects. Was this situation examined in the project? What about cirrhosis detection?

Among hepatic lesions, only hemangioma, and hepatic cyst were studied.

8-Please define the flow chart of participants. What was the participation rate?

A total number of 1200 patients were called to participate in the study, and only 957 individuals accepted the participation (79.75%)

9-Please define the main findings of the research in the first paragraph of discussion.

The required data were added and highlighted

10-What was the new message in this project? Is application of liver ultrasonography in general population recommended? or it should be done in high risk group patients?

Performing sonography in general population is not recommended but in the risk group patients.

……..

Dear Reviewer 2

Thank you for your comments. All comments were applied and highlighted in the manuscript.

Introduction:

1- At the end of introduction it is not clear that what is exactly your goal for doing this research? (What problems have led you to plan this research?)

The required data were added and highlighted

2- So you have not mentioned whether or not it has been done like similar research in other states? What is the prevalence in other states and have we also the prevalence of Iran?

The required data were added and highlighted

Method:

1-You have not reported on the use of drugs in patients and drug history

Such of drugs that can produce various lesions and influence in the production of the lesions but you didn’t mention. Please tell us about medication history of participants.

Information on the drug history of the patients was incomplete due to the recorded results of supplement consumption, and no serious liver damage due to supplements was reported.

2-Were there any limitations in your study (patient admission or...)

Self-reported of participants about the duration of various medication that they consumed could be the limitation of our study.

Result:

1- Please explain each part of the result in the different sections

The required revision was done.

2- Please mention all of the comparison in your result (relationship between sex and lesion, or Comparison between contraceptive and rate of lesion incidence in women?

The required data were added and highlighted

Discussion:

Should be thoroughly revised, needs language revision

The required revision was done.

1-Please more detail about the importance of conducting this study among Iranians, Reasons and comparison with similar studies.

The required data were added and highlighted

2-Are there any studies that have been conducted in a particular country or Nations? Comparing with your data, are there any differences or similar? Because your patients are Iranian and you should better compare your data with those of other nations

The required data were added and highlighted

Reference:

The references are outdated; please use more current references for the article, especially for the discussion section.

The required data were added and highlighted

Dear Associate Editor

Thank you for your comments. All comments were applied and highlighted in the manuscript.

Also, I suggest that the authors use subheadings with proper numbering (2.1., 2.2., 2.3.,.. 3.1., 3.2.) for both methods and results sections.

The required revision was done.

Moreover, the methods section needs further explanations. Please provide an "Ethical considerations" section in your methods.

The required revision was done.

The statistical analyses need further details (e.g. the test used to check the normality of distributions, the univariate tests, etc.).

The required data were added and highlighted

Some references are not valid. Please replace the references before 2000 and make sure that the references style is according to the journal's instructions.

The required data were added and highlighted

Also, please use some recent studies (2020-2022) to complete both introduction and discussion sections.

The required data were added and highlighted

In the results section and the tables, please use three decimals for all P-value amounts (e.g. P=0.051).

The required data were added and highlighted

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Revision (1)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (1) 24 Jul 2022

Dear Editor in Chief
Thanks for assigning me as associate editor to handle the revised version of the manuscript NO.127545 entitled "Investigating the Prevalence of Hepatic Space-Occupying Lesions Based on Sonographic Findings in Patients Referred to Guilan Cohort Center, Iran".
I appreciate the authors' work to revise their manuscript. All of the peer-review comments are addressed by the authors. This version of the manuscript is acceptable for being published in Hepatitis Monthly Journal.

Regards
AE

Seyed Moayed Alavian: EIC | **Revision** (1) 24 Jul 2022

Dear Authors,

I am delighted to inform that your manuscript is accepted for publication.

Regards,
EIC