OPEN PEER REVIEW

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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://sites.kowsarpub.com/kowsar/knowledgebase/category/tree.html#opr.html

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Peer Review Report for "The Use of Neck Sonography in Identifying Cervical Lymph Node: A Single Center Study from 2019 to 2020"

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Review Timeline:

Submit Date: 15 Jan 2021
Revised Date: 31 Jan 2021
Accepted Date: 1 Feb 2021

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)

19 Jan 2021

Dear AE,
Thanks in advance. I read the paper with interest and found that the paper includes useful data, but needs correction by the authors before publication. Malignant lymph nodes in the neck include metastases and lymphoma. Cervical nodal metastases are common in patients with head and neck cancers, and their assessment is important as it affects treatment planning and prognosis. Neck nodes are also a common site of lymphomatous involvement and an accurate diagnosis is essential as its treatment differs from other causes of neck lymphadenopathy. On ultrasound, greyscale sonography helps to evaluate nodal morphology, whilst power Doppler sonography is used to assess the vascular pattern. Greyscale sonographic features that help to identify metastatic and lymphomatous lymph nodes include size, shape, and internal architecture (loss of hilar architecture, presence of intranodal necrosis, and calcification). I have some concerns that hope can help in better presentation of the valuable findings.
1. I encourage the authors to use the STROBE checklist to restructure the paper.
2. Title: I suggest removing or replace the word "importance" from the title. This word confuses the reader and points out to diagnostic accuracy method. Correct the title as "The use of Neck Sonography in identifying Cervical Lymph Node: A single-center study from

2019 to 2020". the data I entered into the title is suggestive and you may correct it.
3. Abstract: replace "1-year period" with the exact day.
4. Abstract: instead of the sentence "Among the patients, the youngest patient was 22 years old and the oldest patient was 88 years old and the mean age of the disease was 57.7 years with a standard deviation of 12.7. 32 patients (19.2%) had pathological cervical lymph nodes and 134 patients (80.8%) had no pathological cervical lymph nodes", go deeper into the type of malignancies, and give the findings.
5. Introduction: Add a paragraph that sheds the light on the epidemiology of "Cervical Lymph Node Metastasis", especially the incidence and prevalence in Iran and the World.
6. Introduction: Give a paragraph on the const of ultrasound and its advantages over other imaging techniques.
7. Method: give the exclusion criteria.
8. replace the figure in table one with the exact table containing values
9. generalize your findings in the "discussion", as well as give the clinical implication of the results.
Thanks.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (0) 26 Jan 2021

Dear AE,
Thanking you for your kind invitation. I read the paper with interest and found it has the potential to add to the literature if the authors correct some minor points.
1. First remove the keywords "importance" from the title
2. Give the exact study date instead of the 1 year period in the abstract.
3. Add a paragraph to the "Introduction" describing the value of Ultrasound comparing to other imaging techniques, especially in the detection of malignancies.
4. In the procedure, in the method section, please describe who did the sonography.
5. Remove the sentence "Between February 2019 and February 2020" from the results.
6. Tables 1 and 2 is a figure, not a table, please correct.
Thanks.

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (0) 26 Jan 2021

Dear EIC
The reviewer(s) have recommended publication, but also suggest some minor revisions to the manuscript. Therefore, I invite the author to respond to the reviewer(s)' comments and revise his manuscript.
Kind regards,

REFEREE: EIC | **Revision** (0) 26 Jan 2021

Dear Author,
Based on our reviewers' comments, your manuscript needs some revision in all sections. I recommend that you revise your manuscript and resubmit.
With regards

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 editorial team

Wish you to have a nice time. We read reviewers comments and we found them very useful and we made the changes they asked.

This is the answer to reviewers comments letter. All changes are made in red.

Best regards

Dr Mahsa Akhavan.

1. *I encourage the authors to use the STROBE checklist to restructure the paper.*
   Answer: dear reviewer we used STROBE checklist and reconstruct the paper.
   2. Title: I suggest to remove or replace the word "importance" from the title. This word confuse the reader and point out to diagnostic accuracy method. Correct the title as "The use of Neck Sonography in identifying Cervical Lymph Node: A single center study from 2019 to 2020". the data I entered into the title is suggestive and you may correct it.
   Answer: thanks for your nice comment, we revised the title according to your comment.
   3. Abstract: replace "1-year period" with the exact day.
   Answer: we correct it in the abstract.
   4. Abstract: instead of the sentence "Among the patients, the youngest patient was 22 years old and the oldest patient was 88 years old and the mean age of the disease was 57.7 years with a standard deviation of 12.7. 32 patients (19.2%) had pathological cervical lymph nodes and 134 patients (80.8%) had no pathological cervical lymph nodes", go deeper into the type of malignancies, and give the findings.

Answer: our main problem in the abstract is the word count that limited we replaced it with: The patients were 22 to 88 years old and the mean age was 57.7 years with a standard deviation of 12.7. 32 patients (19.2%) were presented with pathological cervical lymph nodes and 134 patients (80.8%) were negative for.

5. Introduction: Add a paragraph that sheds the light on the epidemiology of "Cervical Lymph Node Metastasis", especially the incidence and prevalence in Iran and the World.
Answer: we added this information.
6. Introduction: Give a paragraph on the const of ultrasound and its advantages over other imaging techniques.
Answer: we added this information.
7. Method: give the exclusion criteria.
Answer: we added the exclusion criteria.
8. replace the figure in table one with the exact table containing values
We corrected the table and the figures
9. generalize your findings in the "discussion", as well as give the clinical implication of the results.
Answer: base on word count limitation we think the length of the discussion is long enough but if you suggest to add more references we will do so.

Reviewer 2:

Dear editor

Thanking you for your kind invitation. I read the paper with interest and found it has the potential to add to the literature if the authors correct some minor points.

1. First remove the keywords "importance" from the title

Answer: we edited the title.

2. Give the exact study date instead of the 1 year period in the abstract.

Answer: we correct it.

3. Add a paragraph to the "Introduction" describing the value of Ultrasound comparing to other imaging techniques, especially in the detection of malignancies.

Answer: we added this paragraph.

4. In the procedure, in the method section, please describe who did the sonography.

Answer: we added it.

5. Remove the sentence "Between February 2019 and February 2020" from the results.

Answer: we correct it.

6. Tables 1 and 2 is a figure, not a table, please correct.

Answer: we revised all the figures and table.

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (1)

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

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (1) 31 Jan 2021

Dear AE,
In light of the revisions done by respected authors, I am happy with the correction and suggest accepting the manuscript in the revised version.
Thanks.

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (1) 31 Jan 2021

Dear EIC
Based on the authors' answers to the reviewers' comments, the reviewer(s) have recommended publication.
Kind regards.

REFEREE: EIC | **Revision** (1) 1 Feb 2021

Dear Author,
Thank you for submitting your revised manuscript. Based on our reviewer's comments, your manuscript is acceptable in the current format.
With the best regards.