

August 25, 2015

Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed the edited manuscript in Word format (file name: 16976-review.doc).



Title: Management of post-operative fistula in head and neck surgery: Sweeping it under the carpet?

Author: Nguyen Thien Khanh, N Gopalakrishna Iyer

Name of Journal: *World Journal of Otorhinolaryngology*

ESPS Manuscript NO: 16976

The manuscript has been improved according to the suggestions of reviewers:

1. Format has been updated
2. Revision has been made according to the suggestions of the reviewers
 - (1) Irradiated tissue has consistently been shown to be the most significant risk factor for fistula formation post resection. With increasing use of radiotherapy for organ preservation and first line treatment with or without chemotherapy, increasing number of patients undergoing salvage surgery for recurrence will be at a higher risk of developing fistula-related complications. The data for this is still maturing. Additionally, we opted not to include a table on risk factors for the following reasons. Firstly, as stated in the manuscript, the frequency of fistulas in different series range widely, owing to the different types of surgeries and flap choices. This makes it difficult for the data to be presented coherently in a table format. Secondly, conflicting data exist for different risk factors, which may be oversimplified if reduced to table format. We however appreciate your intention in suggesting the table on risk factors. Thus, we have chosen to summarize the data on measures to reduce the risk factors during preoperative consideration. We feel this is more aligned with the main aim of this paper.
 - (2) We have added a table and a figure. The table gives a summary of preoperative considerations, an action plan so to speak. The figure shows how a negative wound pressure therapy can be applied to a complicated fistula.
 - (3) We have revised for typographical errors.
3. References and typesetting were corrected

Thank you again for publishing our manuscript in the *World Journal of Otorhinolaryngology*.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Khanh' or similar, written in a cursive style.

Nguyen Thien Khanh
General Surgery Resident

Singhealth Duke-NUS Head and Neck Centre