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28 September, 2014

Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed the edited manuscript in Word format (file name: 12822-edited-revised.doc).

Title: **A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE PERFORMANCE AND COST-EFFICIENCY OF NURSE AND NON-PHYSICIAN ENDOSCOPISTS IN THE CLINICAL SETTING**

Author: Stephens M, Hourigan LF, Appleyard M, Ostapowicz G, Schoeman M, Desmond PV, Andrews JM, Bourke M, Hewitt D, Margolin DA, Holtmann G

Name of Journal: World Journal of Gastroenterology

ESPS Manuscript NO: 12822

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 reviewer
  - a). Title Changed- **NON-PHYSICIAN ENDOSCOPISTS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW**
  - b). Shortened abstract

Nurse and other non-medical endoscopists have been in practice for more than 35 years primarily the US, UK and Netherlands. We performed a systematic review to examine the available evidence on safety, competency and cost-effectiveness of nursing staff providing gastrointestinal (GI) endoscopy services. Initial searches yielded 74 eligible and relevant articles. These publications included a total of 28,883 procedures performed by non-physician endoscopists. Most studies conclude that after appropriate training nurse

endoscopists safely perform procedures. However, in relation to endoscopic competency, safety or patient satisfaction, all studies had major methodological limitations. Patients were often not randomized (21/26 studies) and not appropriately controlled. In relation to cost-efficiency, nurse endoscopists were less cost-effective per procedure at year 1 when compared to services provided by physicians, due largely to the increased need for subsequent endoscopies, specialist follow-up and primary care consultations. The empirical evidence that supports non-medical and nurse endoscopists is limited to strictly supervised roles in larger metropolitan settings and mainly flexible sigmoidoscopy and upper endoscopy for asymptomatic or low complexity patients. Contrary to general beliefs, endoscopic services provided by nurse endoscopists are not more cost effective compared to standard service models.

c). We have increased the references to 50.

On page 19.....However, before this is accepted as the appropriate setting for nurse endoscopists, the implications for training and overall productivity of services need to be properly explored, particularly in relation to colonoscopy and video capsule endoscopy where there are only limited reports on the use of non physician endoscopists performing these procedures <sup>46-50</sup>.

3 References and typesetting were corrected

4. Figures have been updated.

Thank you again for considering our work for publication in the World Journal of Gastroenterology.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Sincerely yours,

Dr Natasha Koloski