



Reply

Reply letter to: “Response to: Sarcopenia and sarcopenic obesity are significantly associated with poorer overall survival in patients with pancreatic cancer: Systematic review and meta-analysis”


Dear Professor Lau,

We are grateful for the opportunity to respond to the comments made by the colleagues.

We respectfully disagree with criticisms regarding the inclusion of pancreatic cancer with mixed underlying histology. As already reported on the results section (page 20, paragraph 3.2) only “three of 11 studies [23–25] also reported pathologies other than pancreatic adenocarcinoma. These three studies were not included in the meta-analysis, as reported in our manuscript, to allow a better characterisation on the impact of sarcopenia on short-term and long-term outcomes of patients with pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma.

The colleagues noted correctly that patients with pancreatic adenocarcinoma receiving palliative treatment have a significantly worse prognosis than those receiving potentially curative resections. However, when analysing the existing data, we also performed separate meta-analyses for the two treatment modalities, curative and palliative, and sarcopenia remained significantly associated with similar, poorer overall survival in both curative and palliative patients. Therefore, we decided to present the results for the entire study cohort. So, we respectfully disagree with you, that the inclusion of palliative patients in the present meta-analysis overestimates the role of sarcopenia in patients undergoing surgical resection.

Moreover, we respectfully disagree with you that the present study did not address methods of assessment of sarcopenia. The potential limitations of the definition of sarcopenia as well as the assessment methods have been thoroughly discussed in the manuscript. In an attempt to minimize the heterogeneity of the included studies and thus strengthen the significance of our results, we decided to include only studies evaluating the SMI at L3. For this reason other methodologies such as TPA (total psoas area) at L3, were considered ineligible for inclusion in the present systematic review.

Finally we also disagree that we did not use the right statistical methods. Since we originally applied the random effects model, but the statistical reviewers suggested using the fixed effects model. In both models no difference was shown regarding the adjusted and unadjusted HRs. Thus, the fixed effects model used in this meta-analysis did not overestimate the precision of the impact of sarcopenia in pancreatic cancer as suggested.

Yours sincerely
Ioannis Mintziras
Detlef Klaus Bartsch

Data statement

I.M., M.M. and D.K.B.: Conceptualization, Methodology, Validation, Formal analysis, Writing – original draft preparation.

I.M., M.M., S.W., J.M., E.M., D.K.B.: Writing – review and editing,

Supervision.

Ethical approval

None to declare.

Author contribution

Conception or design of the work: I.M., M.M., D.K.B.

Acquisition, analysis of the work: I.M., M.M., S.W., J.M., E.M., D.K.B.

Interpretation of data for the work: I.M., M.M., S.W., J.M., E.M., D.K.B.

Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content: I.M., M.M., S.W., J.M., E.M., D.K.B.

Final approval of the version to be published: I.M., M.M., S.W., J.M., E.M., D.K.B.

Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved: I.M., M.M., S.W., J.M., E.M., D.K.B.

Conflicts of interest

None to declare.

Trial registry number

Research Registry.

Review Registry UIN: reviewregistry562.

Guarantor

Ioannis Mintziras.

Michael Miligkos.

Detlef Klaus Bartsch.

Provenance and peer review

Not Commissioned, internally reviewed.

Sources of funding

None to declare.

Ioannis Mintziras*
Department of Visceral-, Thoracic- and Vascular Surgery, Philipps-
University Marburg, Germany

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijjsu.2019.02.017>

Received 24 February 2019; Accepted 26 February 2019

Available online 04 March 2019

1743-9191/ © 2019 IJS Publishing Group Ltd. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Michael Miligkos
*Laboratory of Biomathematics, University of Thessaly School of Medicine,
Larissa, Greece*

Sabine Wächter, Jerena Manoharan, Elisabeth Maurer,
Detlef Klaus Bartsch
*Department of Visceral-, Thoracic- and Vascular Surgery, Philipps-
University Marburg, Germany*
E-mail address: ioannis.mintziras@uk-gm.de (I. Mintziras),

* Corresponding author. Dept. of Visceral-, Thoracic- and Vascular Surgery,
Philipps-University Marburg, Baldingerstrasse, 35043, Marburg, Germany.