Author reply to the letter to the editor, Re: ‘Laparoscopic and open reversal of Hartmann’s procedure—a comparative retrospective analysis.’ *Surgical Endoscopy* 2008(23):496–502

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We read with great interest Dr. Scheidbach’s comments and we would like to thank him for his remarks as well as for the opportunity to highlight issues regarding laparoscopic reversal of Hartmann’s procedure (LAHR).

We agree with Dr. Scheidbach that the total number of patients who have undergone LAHR worldwide is low and that there remains a need for additional studies on this procedure. To that end, our study contributes to the literature the outcome for a large group of LAHR patients, describes their perioperative course, and compares the results to that for a similar cohort of open cases.

It is our belief that laparoscopic reversal of Hartmann’s procedure should not be simply grouped with or compared with other colorectal laparoscopic procedures because LAHR always follows an emergent colorectal procedure that involves varying degrees of inflammation. For that reason, we chose to compare outcomes for LAHR with that for open Hartmann’s reversal, not with results for a cohort of general colorectal procedures. Within our group, we do not view conversion from LAHR to an open procedure as a complication, and as stated in our manuscript, our conversion rate is within the range reported in the literature. However, it is important to highlight the generally high conversion rate for LAHR, and as such, the procedure should be approached with extra caution by inexperienced surgeons.

In addition, we thank Dr. Scheidbach for bringing to our attention additional literature on the LAHR experience.

Unfortunately, we were unable to locate Dr. Scheidbach’s aforementioned manuscript despite a thorough search of the National Library of Medicine; however, we were able to find his report on 12 LAHR patients after a *Google* search of the Internet [1]. Unfortunately, Haughn et al.’s publication [2] came to our attention only after our revision process was complete. We applaud Dr. Haughn and Dr. Scheidbach for their work, and we congratulate Peterson et al. [3] for the recent series of 71 LAHR patients published this year to which Dr. Scheidbach is presumably referring. We hope that additional studies with larger cohorts will soon be published and contribute to the accumulating experience with LAHR.

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