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REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR- 50278

Date: 13/02/2025

Title: "Intestinal Fistulas in Crohn's Disease: A Complex Challenge – A Moroccan Experience"

Recommendation:	Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Accept as it is ✓ Accept after minor revision Accept after major revision Do not accept (<i>Reasons below</i>)	Originality		\checkmark		
	Techn. Quality		\checkmark		
	Clarity		\checkmark		
	Significance		\checkmark		

Reviewer Name: Dr. S. K. Nath

Reviewer's Comment for Publication.

The study focuses on fistulizing Crohn's disease (CD), a serious and challenging complication of Crohn's disease. It presents real-world data from Morocco, shedding light on healthcare limitations, particularly restricted access to biologics due to financial constraints.

Strengths:

- · Clinically important topic with regional relevance
- Strong methodology with a clear research focus
- Comprehensive data presentation (tables, figures, and statistics)
- Well-supported by global literature

Areas to Improve:

- Fix language and grammatical issues
- Provide more details on statistical analysis
- Expand the discussion section with critical insights
- Make the conclusion more action-oriented

Reviewer's Comment / Report

Strengths of the Paper

1. Clinical Relevance & Importance: The study focuses on fistulizing Crohn's disease (CD), a serious and challenging complication of Crohn's disease. It presents real-world data from Morocco, shedding light on healthcare limitations, particularly restricted access to biologics due to financial constraints.

2. Well-Defined Objectives: The study clearly outlines its aim to assess the epidemiological, clinical, radiological, and therapeutic profile of fistulizing CD, excluding ano-perineal lesions. The research gap is well-identified, especially regarding treatment challenges in Moroccan patients.

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3. Strong Methodological Framework: A retrospective descriptive study over four years provides a good sample size (n=70) to analyze disease trends. Clear inclusion and exclusion criteria ensure that the study is focused.

4. Comprehensive Data Analysis: The study presents detailed statistics on patient demographics, disease duration, fistula types, and treatment modalities. Use of figures and tables helps visualize findings. The results align with global data while providing region-specific insights.

5. Balanced Discussion with Literature Support: The discussion compares findings with international and Moroccan studies, reinforcing the credibility of the results. The importance of multidisciplinary management (medical, surgical, and radiological) is well-highlighted. The study critically evaluates treatment limitations in Morocco, particularly the low use of biologics due to financial constraints.

Areas for Improvement

1. Language & Grammar Issues: The paper contains grammatical errors, awkward phrasing, and typos. Some examples:

Incorrect: "The most frequently observed fistula types were entero-enteric (68.6%), followed by entero-colic (27.1%) and entero-cutaneous (21.4%)."

Corrected: "The most common fistula types were entero-enteric (68.6%), followed by entero-colic (27.1%) and entero-cutaneous (21.4%)."

Incorrect: "While a stenosing phenotype was observed in 58.6% of patients, The most frequently observed fistula types..."

Corrected: "A stenosing phenotype was observed in 58.6% of patients. The most common fistula types were..."

Recommendation: Use professional proofreading to refine the language. Consider shorter, clearer sentences to improve readability.

2. Methodology Needs More Detail: The study states that SPSS Version 20.0 was used for analysis but does not specify:

- What statistical tests were applied? (e.g., chi-square, t-test, ANOVA)
- Were any variables compared for significance?
- Confidence intervals or p-values?

Recommendation: Add more details about statistical methods. If significance testing was not done, acknowledge this as a limitation.

3. Discussion Section Needs More Depth: The discussion summarizes findings well but lacks critical analysis in some areas. The prognosis of fistulizing CD is well discussed, but the long-term impact of treatment choices could be further elaborated. The low use of biologics is mentioned but without exploring alternative strategies (e.g., government assistance programs, clinical trials).

Recommendation: Expand on treatment challenges in Morocco and suggest possible solutions. Discuss how patient prognosis differs between surgical vs. medical management.

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4. Conclusion Should Be More Action-Oriented: The conclusion restates findings but lacks strong recommendations. It would be beneficial to:

• Suggest practical interventions (e.g., increasing accessibility to biologics, improving diagnostic facilities).

• Provide clearer recommendations for future research.

Recommendation: Instead of only summarizing, end with specific calls to action for healthcare providers and policymakers.