Supplementary File S3

1.1. Tongue morphology assessment with NBI

1.1.1. The mean score of blood vessel morphology

39 of 52 (75 %) patients were included in the between-group and within-group NBI_{mean} analysis.

1.1.1.1. Within-group analysis

Friedman's test and pairwise comparisons with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons were performed to analyze differences between NBI_{mean} during the follow-up within each side.

Within the test side the NBI_{mean} did not change statistically significantly from preoperative (*Mdn* = 2.8), to 1st (*Mdn* = 2.5) and to 2nd check-up (*Mdn* = 2.0), $\chi2(2) = 1.327$, $p = .515$.

Within the control side the NBI_{mean} did not change between check-ups (*Mdn* = 3.0), $\chi2(2) = .178$, $p = .915$.

1.1.1.2. Between-group analysis

Mann Whitney U test was run to determine the differences in the NBI_{mean} between the test and control side at the preoperative, 1st and 2nd check-ups.

At preoperative check-up data distributions of the NBI_{mean} were similar for both sides, as assessed by visual inspection. NBI_{mean} were not statistically significantly different between the test (*Mdn* = 2.8) and control side (*Mdn* = 3.0), $U = 689.500$, $z = -.735$, $p = .462$.

At 1st check-up data distributions of the NBI_{mean} were similar for both sides, as assessed by visual inspection. NBI_{mean} were not statistically significantly different between the test (*Mdn* = 2.5) and control side (*Mdn* = 3.0), $U = 679.500$, $z = -.848$, $p = .396$.

At 2nd check-up data distributions of the NBI_{mean} were similar for both sides, as assessed by visual inspection. NBI_{mean} were not statistically significantly different between the test (*Mdn* = 2.0) and control side (*Mdn* = 3.0), $U = 687.500$, $z = -.782$, $p = .434$.