Author's response to reviews

Title: A national survey into perioperative anesthetic management of patients with a fractured neck of femur

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We have now included the 'ethics statement' in the 'Method Section' of our manuscript as requested by the editorial office. We hope that the peer review process could be started after these changes.

Methods
We conducted this national survey in February 2009 via internet by using an electronic questionnaire (Webropol, Helsinki, Finland, http://w3.webropol.com). Our research did not involve human subjects including human material or human data. We were informed by the Finnish Medical Association (FMA) and its lawyer that an approval of an appropriate ethics committee would not be needed on this occasion. A basic activity of the Finnish Medical Association throughout its existence has been to promote ethical principles. Finland became the first country in Europe to enact legislation relating to the status and rights of patients. In response to an initiative taken by the FMA, the World Medical Association (WMA) has adopted the Declaration on the Rights of the Patient which is binding on the medical profession in every country. The FMA also made significant contributions to amendment of the Ethical Principles for Medical Research Involving Human Subjects (the Declaration of Helsinki). Based on these declarations, we were advised by FMA lawyer that we wouldn't need any further approvals from ethics committee since we are doing a national survey concerning the opinions and treatment practices of the members of the Finnish Society of Anesthesiologists.

We obtained a list of all the members of the Finnish Society of Anesthesiologists from the General Secretary of the Society. The society had 989 active members at the time of the survey. Of the active members, 772 were specialists and 217 were trainees in anesthesia and intensive care. We sent an invitation to participate in the survey by an e-mail message to all the members with a known e-mail address, altogether 768 anesthetists. The invitation was resent twice (with a three-week interval) to assure that all the members had received the message
and had an opportunity to answer. The Webropol platform allows only one reply from each e-mail address, thus preventing multiple replies from a single person.

The survey was in a structured tick box format and it also provided free text fields for each group of inquired items for more detailed answers and explanations. The questionnaire was divided into three main sections: 1) preoperative pain management, 2) anesthetic technique and intraoperative analgesia and sedation, and 3) postoperative pain management. The type of respondent’s hospital (university, central, regional or other) and respondent’s specialist / trainee status were also inquired. The frequency of their use of a particular technique was graded on a five-step scale: always, mostly, occasionally, rarely and never. Results of the survey are expressed as the percentage and the number of anesthetists using a particular technique always or mostly per all individuals who had responded to that individual question.

Kind regards,

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