Author's response to reviews

Title: The impact of vitamin D supplementation on vascular stiffness and blood pressure in Chronic Kidney Disease patients

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Author's response to reviews: see over
August 10th 2014

Dear Editors, and reviewers

Thank you for the opportunity of revising our manuscript, and for the insights and comments. We believe that we have answered the questions and addressed the comments in this revised version, and furthermore believe that the paper has been much improved through this process.
Below please find the itemized answers to the reviewers comments, below the actual comments for ease.
We have also included one manuscript with tracked changes for ease of reviewing those, as well as a clean version, which we trust is easier to read.

We hope that you find this revised version of the paper acceptable, and we look forward to further communication from you.

Reviewer's report
Title: The impact of vitamin D supplementation on vascular stiffness and blood pressure in Chronic Kidney Disease patients
Version: 2 Date: 17 June 2014
Reviewer: Fellype C Barreto
Reviewer's report:
Minor Essential Revisions
It would be interesting to discuss the ethics of administering placebo in RCT.
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests: I declare that I have no competing interests

REPLY: We have addressed the issue of administering placebo in this study by more completely describing the clinical equipoise that exists regarding the supplementation of vitamin D. This is actually a strength of the study, given the number of studies in nephrology that have been negative when a placebo control is used, but were positive or demonstrating harm when only different doses or molecules were compared. Thank you for drawing our attention to this that we could better underscore it.

Reviewer's report
Title: The impact of vitamin D supplementation on vascular stiffness and blood pressure in Chronic Kidney Disease patients
Version: 2 Date: 15 July 2014
Reviewer: Ishir Bhan
Reviewer's report:
This manuscript describes a placebo-controlled, 3 arm, randomized trial that
intends to examine the effects of two forms of vitamin D on vascular stiffness using pulse wave velocity. My main concerns with this manuscript are the lack of citations for previous work in this area (including clarification of what this study adds, and lack of clarify in the details of the study.

Major compulsory revisions
The abstract should state that the trial is randomized.
The manuscript, including the abstract, often refers loosely to “vitamin D” without clarification as to which form is being discussed.
In the background, the contribution of LVH, which is highly prevalent in CKD, should be discussed with respect to cardiovascular disease in addition to athero/arterosclerotic processes.

REPLY: We have added more citations into the background and discussion now, and emphasize how this study is novel. This information is found in the abstract and in the discussion sections. Note that other work in this area has either focused on dialysis patients, or on non CKD patients, have been of short duration and of small sample size. Thus, we believe that this undertaking, which is more extensive, may contribute more to the literature and our understanding than previous work. We have also addressed the details of the study more fully in the methods section, so that it is more clearly understood by the reader.

Both the title and the abstract now contain the word ‘randomized’, so as to be very clear to all. The specific of types of vitamin D compounds are now clearly described where appropriate. The background and discussion now include references to LVH more overtly as a cause and consequence of CKD.

We trust that the reviewers and the editors find these changes acceptable. Thank you for the opportunity of revising this paper.

Yours truly
Adeera Levin on behalf of the authors.