Author's response to reviews

Title: Comparison of the risk factors effects between two populations: two alternative approaches illustrated by the analysis of first and second kidney transplant recipients.

Authors:

Katy Trébern-Launay (katy.launay@univ-nantes.fr)
Magali Giral (mgiral@chu-nantes.fr)
Jacques Dantal (jacques.dantal@chu-nantes.fr)
Yohann Foucher (yohann.foucher@univ-nantes.fr)

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Author's response to reviews:

Object: Revision for the manuscript MS: 6836110809631820 entitled “Comparison of the risk factors effects between two populations: two alternative approaches illustrated by the analysis of first and second kidney transplant recipients”.

Dear Editor in Chief,

We have received the comments of the reviewers concerning our manuscript. As you suggested, we are submitting a revised version of our manuscript that addresses the points made by both reviewers. All modifications are highlighted in bold in the manuscript and we include a response to each point brought up in the current letter.

As you requested, we also add the “Competing interests” section that was missing in our first version.

We look forward to hearing your decision,

Sincerely,

Yohann Foucher
(with the approval of the co-authors)

Reviewer 1.

“Thirty seven FTR patients were also part of the STRgroup since they received two transplants during the study period. Though few, and even if conditional independence of the two transplantations in a given patient were possible, the authors did not provide convincing evidence, since the power of their frailty Cox model was certainly low.”

We agree with the reviewer that the independence assumption may be partly due to the low statistical power of the frailty model. According to this comment, we
have performed a complementary analysis by computing the model after exclusion of the 37 STR also included in FTR. These results have been added to the original manuscript as additional files. Regardless the possible selection bias of this additional approach, the results appeared similar than the ones we presented in the first version.

The manuscript has been modified in a new version, according to the limitation that you underlined. To clarify this point, we have added in the text the following sentences:

- to the result section, following the frailty model sentence: “In order to validate the robustness of the results, we also performed both models after exclusion of the 37 STR also included in FTR. These results are presented in additional files.”

- to the discussion section, in the limitations part: “Second, both models assumed the independence of FTR and STR. While this assumption was evaluated by using a frailty model among the 37 individuals common in both groups, a low statistical power may explain the non-rejection of this independence hypothesis. To ensure the validity of our results, we reperformed both models after exclusion of the corresponding 37 STR also included in FTR. The results presented in additional files showed the robustness of the results.”

Reviewer 2

“I have reviewed this manuscript and have no major concern. The manuscript is well-prepared and well-written.”

We would like to thank the reviewer for pointing out the quality of our work.