Author's response to reviews

Title: Consensus-Based Recommendations for Investigating Clinical Heterogeneity in Systematic Reviews

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear Associate Editor,

We would like to thank the editors for their comments on this manuscript. We list each editor's comments and respond to them individually, describing our edits within the revised manuscript.

Comment 1: One of the reviewers comments that as a guideline, the manuscript should be 'compressed' [since an 'explanation and elaboration' manuscript was to follow]. To respond to this comment, the authors incorporated both manuscript together, and this is a much longer document - adding about 10-11 pages.

Response 1: One reviewer suggested elaborations on many of our recommendations and therefore we provided that. So, instead of 2 papers (a concise one and an elaboration) we constructed a single paper that ended up being much longer. We hope you find this acceptable, as we feel this has greatly improved our paper.

Comment 2: In general, the manuscript is ok, but there are grammatical errors and the text could still be tightened up a bit. For example, on page 10, line 5, the 'In' should be deleted before 'Table 1..." Page 12 last paragraph, the author use 'chose' instead of 'chosen', Page 13 last paragraph, next to last sentence, the 'a' should be deleted from 'This is a reasonable since in some cases....'APD and IPD are used before being defined on page 17 Page 20 first full paragraph, there should be a 'to' between 'acceptable' and 'combine' and the last sentence in that paragraph starting with " Whereas subgroups..." makes no sense."

Response 2: We would like to thank the editor for this valuable comments. We have carefully re-read the manuscript and corrected the grammatical other
written errors.

We hope you find the manuscript suitable for publication and please let us know if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

On behalf of my co-authors,

Joel J Gagnier