Author's response to reviews

Title: Physician Reported Perception in the Treatment of High Blood Pressure Does Not Correspond To Practice

Authors:

   Randy Wexler (Randy.Wexler@osumc.edu)
   Terry Elton (terry.elton@osumc.edu)
   Christopher A Taylor (chris.taylor@osumc.edu)
   Adam Pleister (adam.pleister@osumc.edu)
   David Feldman (david.feldman@osumc.edu)

Version: 3 Date: 25 November 2008

Author's response to reviews: see over
November 25, 2008

The BioMed Central Editorial Team

Tel: +44 (0)20 7631 9921  
Facsimile: +44 (0)20 7631 9923  
e-mail: editorial@biomedcentral.com  
Web: http://www.biomedcentral.com/

Re: MS: 8203604532207976
Physician Reported Perception in the Treatment of High Blood Pressure Does Not Correspond To Practice
Randy Wexler, Terry Elton, Christopher A Taylor, Adam Pleister and David Feldman

We thank the reviewers and the editorial team for the constructive criticisms. The recommended changes have been made and the end result is an improved manuscript.

The changes made to the manuscript are outlined below:

Editor Comment: In particular the population of practitioners studied and the method used to sample them needs to be described and their characteristics compared with of other family or general internal medicine physicians.  
Response: Physician characteristics are reported in the first paragraph of the results section. Sampling method is more clearly defined now in the methods section. Discussion of the implication of physician characteristics is now in the discussion section as also requested by one of the reviewers.

Editor Comment: There should also be an explanation of how the questionnaire was validated.  
Response: Added under methods.

Editor Comment: There also needs to be more explanation of how the study will inform the content of education interventions.  
Response: Added under discussion

Editor Comment: Provide more information in the background section of your abstract.  
Response: Please see revised abstract.

Editor Comment: Although you state that you received IRB approval, please document within the methods section of your manuscript, the specific name of the ethics committee which gave the approval.  
Response: Please see revised methods section.

Editor Comment: Document, within your manuscript, whether you received informed consent from your study participants and if this was verbal or written.  
Response: Please see revised methods section.

Reviewer Comment: The study sample was small and selected. This purposive sample reduces the certainty and generalization of this study.  
Response: We agree. However, the intent of this survey was to develop formative data for future work. As such, we believe that the information obtained does provide benefit. In addition, the lack of response to blood
pressure control is consistent with other larger surveys: Hyman, DJ, Pavlik VN. Self-reported Hypertension Treatment Practices Among Primary Care Physicians: Blood Pressure Thresholds, Drug Choices, and the Role of Guidelines and Evidence-Based Medicine. Arch Intern Med. 2000;160:2281-2286. This has been expounded upon in the discussion section.

Reviewer Comment: The current manuscript does not provide any information on the questionnaire’s content and face validity.
Response: Added under methods.

Reviewer Comment: Analysis of date is not suitable for categorical/ordinal Likert-type scales data, where median values reflect better the distribution of the participants’ answers and not the mean values and standard deviations.
Response: In Table 1, we have removed the median column, as well as the numbering system that makes this table appear in Likert format. However, we believe that the table does have value as it demonstrates a very clear and strong response on the part of the physicians.

Reviewer Comment: The paper does not discuss some theories that can be used in intervention programs with the aim to change the patients’ non-compliance to optimal hypertension control. Literature is rich in psychological theories, including these of reasoned action and planned behavior.
Response: Please see additions to the discussion section which address this comment.

Reviewer Comment: The questions included in the survey were not specific and detailed enough to achieve the objective of the study. I do not think the results of the study would contribute to “development of educational interventions” even though the authors intended to contribute to it through the study.
Response: The questions in the survey were intended to provide formative data to provide future direction. We have re-written the last sentence in the background section to better reflect this.

Reviewer Comment: Abstracts – backgrounds (Page 2): The authors need to clarify the objective of this study more clearly.
Response: Please see re-written abstract.

Reviewer Comment: The following questions included in the survey did not correspond to the scope of the study described in the background section:
# “Control of hypertension is a significant public health problem.”
# “I do a good job of treating my patients’ hypertension.”
Response: We believe that understanding if physicians so consider hypertension a health problem, as well as their opinion as to their treatment of their patients is an important part in better understanding primary care physician’s opinions regarding use of guidelines, barriers to treatment and treatment decision making in the management of hypertension.

Reviewer Comment: The expressions used to describe the objective of the study such as “barriers to treatment” and “treatment decision making in the management of hypertension” need to be specified.
Response: Please see re-written abstract and background section.

Reviewer Comment: The authors need to explain about the parent population and the sampling method of the study in detail.
Response: Please see re-written methods and results section.

Reviewer Comment: Discussion/conclusion (page 7): the first sentence of page 7 (started with “much has been …”) did not have much relevance to the results of the study because educational interventions for changing physician behavior are beyond the scope of this study. I think the sentence need to be removed from the discussion.
Response: This sentence has been re-written.
Reviewer Comment: Backgrounds (Page 3): The objective of the study was not clearly stated in the background section. The first sentence of the method section (page 4) which described the objective of the study needs to be moved to the end of background section.  
Response: the last sentence in the background section and the first sentence in methods section have been re-written.

Reviewer Comment: Discussion/conclusion (page 6): the authors need to describe conclusion in a separate section.  
Response: This change has been made.

Reviewer Comment: Discussion/conclusion (page 6~7): The authors need to discuss what would be the effect of characteristics of the survey respondents such as the type of specialty and the location of practice on the result of the study.  
Please see re-written discussion section.

Thank you for consideration.

Randy Wexler, MD, MPH