Author's response to reviews

Title: Chronic non-specific abdominal complaints in general practice: a prospective study on management, patient health status and course of complaints

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Answer to reviewer's comments:

1. The wording under course of complaints has been extensively adapted according to the reviewer's remarks. Global improvement in this study is when patients indicate that their abdominal complaints improved during the last 6 months. In this new version we only mention baseline and 18 months outcomes to avoid misunderstandings.
2. Table I: “global improvement has been changed into subjective improvement, with a remark under the table: c. percentage of patients that reported improvement of their complaints at follow-up.
3. In the text belonging to Table II the following is added: Age and sex were not related to subjective improvement of complaints or to the course of pain intensity.
4. In the abstract under results the line under improvement is rephrased to obtain more clarity: When asked after 18 months of follow-up the patients reported equal or worsening severity of complaints in 51.7%.
5. The line in the introduction: As yet, however, diagnosis and management.... Received little research attention has been deleted. We agree with the referee that this line causes confusion.
7. Data for this prospective study were collected during 1997-1999. This statement has been inserted into the text.
8. Statistical analyses have been omitted from Table I because of our explorative research question. We fully agree with the comments on the usage of Anova.
9. All results concerning the time points 6 and 12 months are now completely left out. Because discussion of the measurements at 6 and 12 months showed no significant deviations in time, we wanted in this paper to concentrate on baseline and 18 months data.