Author's response to reviews

Title: Female asylum seekers with musculoskeletal pain: the importance of diagnosis and treatment of hypovitaminosis D

Authors:

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Manuscript: Female asylum seekers with musculoskeletal pain: the importance of diagnosis and treatment of hypovitaminosis D

Dear Editor,

We would like to ask you to consider our revised manuscript for publication in your journal. The manuscript has not been published elsewhere and has been approved by all authors.

We thank you for your comments and we provide here following the point-by-point responses to the reviewer.

We hope that the changes made are satisfactory and that the manuscript can now be published.

Thank you very much, yours faithfully,

Gabrielle de Torrenté de la Jara, Bernard Favrat
Reviewer's report

Title: Female asylum seekers with musculoskeletal pain: the importance of diagnosis and treatment of hypovitaminosis D

Reviewer: Vin Tangpricha

Reviewer's report:

General
The major comments have been addressed. Extensive revisions have been made to the manuscript and many of the issues have been clarified. This manuscript is a very nice addition to the growing literature of subclinical vitamin D insufficiency causing a vague chronic pain syndrome.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

The term asylum seekers is not generally a term used in the US. I wonder if another term could be used. Would foreign refugees be a better term?

The term asylum seekers is the political term that describes the best the situation of our patients who come from foreign countries. They are not permanently accepted in the country, in that sense, they are not refugees. In Switzerland, asylum seekers keep this status, sometimes for years (mean stay in Switzerland: 5.27 years), until they receive a decision of permanent stay or of rejection. During this lapse of time, they are in an unstable situation, rendering them often psychologically vulnerable.

Our asylum seekers are therefore sometimes transitory immigrants, sometimes permanent refugees. In our “canton” (state), asylum seekers are necessarily in a double gate keeping system (nurse practitioner and primary care physicians), which is specific for this health network. This made the follow-up of our patients possible by reviewing all files.

The term foreign refugees does not seem quite appropriate to describe our patients. It could be “immigrants awaiting a decision of stay”. In Europe, the term asylum seekers is commonly used. In the US, we found very similar definitions:

http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/asylum/asylum.htm

a-sy·lum (ə-sī′ləm) n
People who fear harm or persecution in their home country can ask for a form of protection known as asylum after arriving in the United States. “Asylum seekers” must first prove that their fear is both well-founded and based on their race, religion, nationality, social group or political opinion. If a person can meet these requirements, he or she is considered a refugee under U.S. law
and can be **granted asylum** by our government.

We are ready to discuss this point further, but at this point, we think the term asylum seeker is appropriate.

Some of the one or two sentence paragraphs could be combined to the preceding paragraphs.

**What next?:** Accept after discretionary revisions

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research:

**Interests**

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare I have no competing interests