Author's response to reviews

Title: Polyethylene glycol vs. sodium phosphate for bowel preparation: A treatment arm meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Subject: REVISE DECISION: MS: 1738036291402571

Editor, BMC series Journals

Dear Editor:

On behalf of my co-authors, I submit the revised manuscript **MS: 1738036291402571** entitled, Polyethylene glycol vs. sodium phosphate for bowel preparation: A treatment arm meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials.

We have revised the manuscript according to the comments of the reviewer. As instructed, we have copied the Reviewers’ comments below prior to our response to each comment.

Thank you for your and the reviewers’ thoughtful comments, and for re-considering our manuscript.

Sincerely

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Reviewer's report
Discretionary Revisions

(1) The meta-analysis was performed using results of 71 (published) RCTs. Each RCT had 2 or more bowel prep
treatments (arms), the prep arms were not the same for all of the
RCTs and, collectively there 104 evaluable arms (Table 3).
Results of each of the 104 arms were based on outcomes of many
enrolled patients. The prep treatment group or arm is the unit
for statistical analysis (not number of patients or number of
studies). I expect the terminology that describes arranging data
for meta-analysis will be confusing for some readers (study,
trial, arm, treatment group definitions).

The authors can consider:
- use “Prep Treatment” for the column 1 label in Tables 2 and 3,

**Appropriate changes have been made to the column 1 label in
Tables 1, 2 and 3.**

- Table 3, change column 2 label from “# Trial Groups” to “# of
Treatment Arms”

**Appropriate changes have been made to the column 2 label in
Tables 1, 2 and 3.**

- “Trial groups” and arms (treatment arms) seem to be the same
label - use only one label throughout - “treatment group” in
lines 8 and 9 of page 6 can be changed to “treatment arm” … and
so on

**Appropriate changes have been made in page 6, lines 8 and 9 of
the manuscript.**

(2)
“Pooled” is mainly a jargon of statistics. Would “Combined” be a
replacement?

**Appropriate changes have been made in page 6, line 14 of the
manuscript.**

(3)
The implications of the statistics in Tables 2 and 3 are clear.
I suggest that the authors consider additionally showing a
Figure that plots individual prep arm results and the meta-
analysis summary statistic (% Good or Excellent, or % Prep
Completed).

**Forrest plot for both prep quality by treatment arm as well as
prep completion/ acceptability were added.**