Author's response to reviews

Title: Development of the Pediatric Quality of Life Inventory(TM) Eosinophilic Esophagitis Module items: qualitative methods

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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Dr. Timothy Shipley
Executive Editor
BMC Gastroenterology

Re: MS: 1228886709725468; Development of the Pediatric Quality of Life Inventory™
Eosinophilic Esophagitis Module items: Qualitative methods

Dear Dr. Shipley,

Thank you for the opportunity to revise our manuscript entitled, “Development of the Pediatric Quality of Life Inventory™
Eosinophilic Esophagitis Module items: Qualitative methods,” for BMC Gastroenterology. We have addressed your comments and the comments of the Reviewers below and in the text. We thank you and the Reviewers for your comments, as we believe that the manuscript has been improved by addressing the comments. We have highlighted our revisions in blue type throughout the manuscript to facilitate the review of these changes.

Reviewer: Steffen Husby
Reviewer's report:
General comment:
Eosinophilic Esophagitis (EoE) has during the last decades been recognized as an emerging disease particularly, but not uniformly, in children and adolescents. The subject of Health related Quality of Life (HRQoL) in EoE has not been addressed previously, so the subject of the present paper is highly relevant. The paper describes the development of a quality patient-driven questionnaire for the assessment of the burden of EoE in children and adolescents. The framework stems from a generic trademarked questionnaire for chronic disease in general in pediatrics. The methodology is interesting: use of interviews to generate items and then use of cognitive interviews to modify/improve the items.

We thank the reviewer for these comments.

Major compulsory revisions:
1) Focus group interviews were seemingly performed in relation to a previous publication, but no clear reference is given. Should be given

We have highlighted the reference for this previous publication.

2) The present study describes cognitive interviews in 17 children and 27 parents. A considerable proportion of the children had associated atopic disease, which may influence the interpretation. Please substantiate this remark.

Patients with eosinophilic esophagitis frequently do have atopic disease in proportions that are generally reflected in our cohort distribution that may influence their response to various therapies. However, whether children do or do not have atopic disease does not influence the types of upper GI tract symptoms that they report.
3) As noted by the authors the population contains different backgrounds, which should be more thoroughly reported.

A sentence at the top of page 11 has been revised which states, “Basic cohort demographic, age categories, allergic disease comorbidity, medication use and EoE treatments are summarized in Table 2.”

Minor essential revisions:
1) Material and Methods: explain the representativity of the patients with regard to age distribution and symptom severity compared to the total clinical material at the Clinical Center for EoE.

A sentence at the top of page 8 was revised to reflect these comments. Specifically, we state, “Pediatric participants were restricted to those with a confirmed diagnosis of EoE and without other co-morbidities, including: inflammatory bowel disease, celiac disease, psychiatric disorder, and/or therapy with psychiatric/behavioral medication. Purposive sampling was utilized to ensure that the full clinical spectrum of pediatric EoE phenotypes, ages and symptomatology was represented.” Additional age range patient numbers are provided in Table 2.

2) Tables: use of percentages without the actual numbers is confusing and should be corrected.

Table 2 has been revised to reflect these comments.

Discretionary Revisions:
1) A drawback is the use of biased questions like “I do not like going to the doctor”. Some questions are not completely clear: “I worry about eating food I’m allergic to or not supposed to eat”. Otherwise, the paper is generally well-written.

Thank you for this comment.

2) The interviews elucidated problems and concerns that had not been previously addressed, but they include a paucity of data. Inclusion of data from the following multicenter evaluation would be welcomed.

We will report the field test findings once completed.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Reviewer: Hans PROF Van Rostenberghe
Reviewer's report:
This article reports the development of a very important questionnaire. The report is very well written.
Introduction is clear and to the point.
The methods are well stated and appropriate
The results are presented accurately
Both on relevance and newsworthiness this article is scoring high
Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field
Quality of written English: Acceptable

We thank the reviewer for these comments.