Author's response to reviews

Title: Gastrointestinal failure in intensive care: a retrospective clinical study in three different intensive care units in Germany and Estonia.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor-in-Chief

Enclosed, please find the revised version of the manuscript – Gastrointestinal failure in intensive care: a retrospective clinical study in three different intensive care units in Germany and Estonia. A. Reintam, P. Parm, U. Redlich, L.-M. Tooding, J. Starkopf, F. Köhler, C. Spies, H. Kern

We would like to thank you and the reviewer for comments. Revision has been made according to these comments; details of the changes made are listed below. We hope that the revised manuscript can be considered for publication in BMC Gastroenterology.

Annika Reintam
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Answers to the reviewers

Reviewer # 1

1. In their response to my comment, the authors have detailed the 47 variables that were analyzed. These variables should be mentioned in the methods section of the manuscript.

47 variables are listed in the methods section.

2. In the results section of the manuscript, describe which 23 of the 47 variables were associated with GIV by univariate analysis. Such information will help future research.

23 variables are listed in the results section of revised version.

3. The study shows that the development of GIF was an independent risk factor for mortality. The authors performed multiple logistic regression analysis with a model including APACHE II, SOFA and GIF. In the Results section, they summarized the results of the logistic regression analysis as true-positive, true-negative and overall correct. Since the study’s main contribution is describing association nor real prediction, I suggest deleting the prediction part of the analysis. Table 2 clearly describes the odds ratio with the 95% confidence intervals of the variables (APACHE, SOFA and GIF) that were entered in the model. Adding the P value for each variable will be important.

We agree that real prediction of mortality is not the main contribution of the study. The respective part of manuscript has been deleted. P values are added into the table.

Reviewer # 2

Reviewer # 3

p2, last sentence: change to: , and to determine its association with ICU mortality
p2, line 6: retrospective analysis instead of assessment
p2, line 17: please indicate which type of admission is associated with GIF
p2, 4th line from bottom: development of GIF during ICU stay was an independent predictor
p3, second last line. However, recent studies
p4, first line: and the development (instead of occurrence) of intraabdominal hypertension during ICU stay is an independent outcome predictor.
P5, line 8; p8 line 2: do not start a sentence with a number
P6 paragraph 4, line 3: the use of the word respectively does not make any sense here, please omit
P8 line 5: omit in respective departments

Respective changes are made.
P9, line 1 please state for what patient profile the odds ratio is given medical or surgical?

Emergency profile (both medical and surgical emergencies)

P9, line 3-5: rephrase provide values for PPV, NPV, sensitivity, specificity and accuracy. P9, last paragraph, I don’t understand the meaning of adding subsequent variables into the multiple logistic regression model, enter all variables that were highly significant p < 0.01 and see what comes out

Rewiever # 1 correctly pointed out that the study’s main contribution is describing association nor real prediction of mortality. APACHE II and SOFA as validated outcome predictors were used to describe association between GIF and mortality. We decided to delete the part describing prediction of mortality from manuscript.

P10, first paragraph can be omitted
P11, second paragraph, line 8: replace summed up to by was

Respective changes are made.

P13, please address the fact that APACHE II score was validated fro hospital mortality while ICU mortality was used in your study

The fact is addressed in discussion section of revised version.

Please expand abbreviations when used for the first time and then use abbreviations in a concise way throughout the manuscript eg p3 second paragraph line 5: GI failure; line 8: gastrointestinal failure, page 4 last line, etc: replace by GIF!

Respective changes are made.