Author's response to reviews

Title: Predictors of gallstone composition in 1025 symptomatic gallstones from Northern Germany

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editors,

thank you very much for the opportunity to publish our work in BMC Gastroenterology. We have made the requested changes. Please find the revised manuscript enclosed. We hope it is now suitable for publication in BMC Gastroenterology.

With kind regards,

Jochen Hampe
Clemens Schafmayer
Point-by-point response to editorial requests

1. The name of the ethics committee was included. The respective sentence reads now:
All study protocols were approved by the institutional ethics committee ("Ethikkommission des Universitätsklinikums Schleswig-Holstein, Kiel) and by the public data protection agency.

2. A brief conclusion section was introduced after the discussion:
In summary, this study documents a dramatic change in gallstone composition – in the high-prevalence region of Northern Germany – with a overwhelming preponderance of cholesterol-based gallstones. This is in contrast to the gallstone composition in recent studies from sub-Saharan Africa [15] and China [16] [17]. Based on the findings of this study, a potential homogenous target population in Germany for non-surgical intervention [12] [13] for the prevention of cholesterol stones would be obese individuals with a BMI > 30, for which approximately 95% of cholesterol gallstones were observed in both males and females.

3. A competing interests section was included:
'The author(s) declare that they have no competing interests'.

4. An authors contribution section was included in the manuscript.