Author's response to reviews

Title: Commonly used bowel preparations have significant and different effects upon cell proliferation in the colon: a pilot study

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor

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In response to peer review, we have made amendments to this manuscript. The changes to the text are summarised below, along with additional responses to questions and comments put by the reviewers.

P. Bucher

No action required

R. Goodlad

1. p values for Ki-67, pHH3 and mitotic figures (figures 3A and 4 and page 11 of text) have been rounded to 3 decimal places.

2. “floor-to-ceiling” has been removed and replaced with a simpler descriptive statement (p. 12).

3. Reviewer states that our reference to a study reporting no significant changes in proliferation in HNPCC contradicts other studies. Our intention here was to point out that the lack of any expected disease-induced cell proliferation in the referenced study may have been attributable to the bowel preparation used, masking any disease effect. We feel that this point is unambiguous and does not require correction in the manuscript.

4. Reviewer requests a discussion re value of methods and applicability to biopsy samples. The use of Cronbach’s alpha statistic to justify the numbers of replicates within each sample and to compare the reliability of
the two different techniques is described (last paragraph, p.9), along with a discussion comparing the advantages and disadvantages of each.

5. Reviewer raises the possibility that food intakes were not the same for the prepped and unprepped groups. This is indeed the case, and while it does not detract from the central finding of the study, i.e., that Klean-Prep and Picolax have significantly opposing effects on cell proliferation, it has been addressed as a caveat in an additional section, “Limitations of Study”, on p. 13.

F. Simmen

1. We accept that a randomisation bias on clinical grounds may have been introduced in the allocation of patients to either Klean-Prep or Picolax. This has been addressed in the section headed “Limitations of study” (p.13).

2. Reviewer states that the study would be strengthened by a greater number of crypts studied per individual. We are not in agreement with this; the number of crypts studies is adequate and in line with published data. Our own Cronbach’s alpha values (last sentence, p.9) for reliability and consistency within samples confirm this.

We accept that the number of individuals recruited for this study is low. We have drawn attention to this in the text (p.13), and in the title, using the term “pilot study”. We also make the point that our findings have informed our choice of bowel preparation protocol for any future studies requiring repeat endoscopies.
Editor

Informed consent of patients; a statement to this effect has been added to the Methods section on p.6.

We hope that the above amendments have adequately addressed the reviewers’ concerns and that the manuscript is now suitable for publication.

Yours Sincerely

Lisa Croucher