Author's response to reviews

Title: Limitations of the MELD score in predicting mortality or need for removal from waiting list in patients awaiting liver transplantation

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

we would like to thank you and the reviewers for the again excellent comments and hope, that we addressed the final topics completely and satisfactory. 
Please find below the point-by-point response to the remaining remarks of reviewer Michael A. Fink.

Referee 3: Reviewer: Michael A Fink

1. I note, however, that a major error persists in the current version. Table 4 identifies the sensitivity and specificity of CTP as 68.9% and 70.1%, respectively and the sensitivity and specificity of MELD as 62.0% and 72.6%, respectively. Derived from the table, the correct figures are: 69.0% and 70.5% for CTP and 62.1% and 72.7% for MELD. In the abstract and the results section, the sensitivity and specificity figures are reversed: "The sensitivity and specificity to identify mortality or severe deterioration for CTP was 70.1% and 68.9%, respectively; for MELD, it was 72.6% and 62.0%, respectively."

We thank Michael Fink for critically reading our manuscript and pointing out these important topics. The percentages as well as the reversal of the number in the abstract and the results section were corrected as indicated. In addition order of sensitivity and specificity of Table 4 were switched, in order to achieve the same order as in the text.

2. In terms of determining the ideal cut-off for each of the measurements, this would usually be derived from the ROC analysis. The authors report that the cut-offs were "determined by minimizing the false positive and false negative results of each score". It is not clear to me exactly how this was done and I think that the appropriateness of this technique needs to be confirmed by a statistician.

The optimal cut-offs were determined by graphical analysis of the individual data by minimizing the false positive and false negative results of each score to achieve the highest accuracy. This topic has been extensively discussed with author Thomas Bruckner, who is a reputable statistician of Institute for Medical Biometry and Informatics, University Hospital Heidelberg.