Author’s response to reviews

Title: The BELFRAIL (BFC80+) Study: A Population-based Prospective Cohort Study of the Very Elderly in Belgium

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
To the Editor-in-Chief of BMC Geriatrics
Dr Melissa Norton

Brussels, Belgium, 9th June 2010

Dear Dr Norton,

We would like to thank you for considering our manuscript entitled ‘The BELFRAIL (BF_{C80+}) Study: A Population-based Prospective Cohort Study of the Very Elderly in Belgium’ for possible publication in BMC Geriatrics. Herewith we would like to submit our revised manuscript.

As asked by the editorial team we provided a sample size calculation of our study. The following paragraph was inserted in the methods section of our manuscript:

“Sample size calculations were based on the first focus of this study: to determine the diagnostic accuracy of clinical signs and symptoms for heart failure. Therefore the sample size calculation was based on the following premises: 1) the expected prevalence of "cardinal" symptoms (i.e. dyspnea, fatigue, peripheral edema) of CHF in octogenarians of 30%, 2) the worst-case scenario in which none of these criteria would have any diagnostic value (i.e. proportion of any symptom of 0,5) and taking into account an acceptable confidence interval of 90%, and 3) assuming a prevalence of CHF of 15% in octogenarians. The sample size for the BF_{C80+} was estimated on 420 subjects. Taking into account a refusal rate of not more than 10% and a yearly mortality rate of 10% a sample size of 550 was proposed.”

We hope you will consider our revised manuscript for publication in BMC Geriatrics.

On behalf of all authors,

Yours sincerely,

Dr Vaes Bert