Author's response to reviews

Title: Restless legs syndrome and functional limitations among American elders in the Health and Retirement Study

Authors:

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Author's response to reviews: see over
RE: MS: 1200095748633776

May 25, 2012

Dear Dr. Pura:

Thank you for allowing extra time to review the comments from the reviewers. The input for our manuscript, “Restless legs syndrome and functional limitations among American elders in the Health and Retirement Study” is attached. To avoid duplication, we deferred the previous responses, which were covered by the letters dated 1/27/12 and 3/16/12.

Reviewer #1 (Gao): “Interaction between gender and RLS in relation risk of disability. In the table 3, the authors only reported the association between gender and RLS risk rather than interaction between this two factors.”

Response: Based on this suggestion, we conducted a thorough examination of bivariate interactions. In the model predicting restless legs syndrome (RLS), there were no meaningful interactions between the predictors in Table 3. With specific attention to gender interactions with RLS in predicting concurrent and longitudinal disability, there were no associations that were significant beyond random chance. The analysis was stratified by gender, but there were small numbers of males with RLS (26 out of 430, 6%) which lead to wide variance in the estimates, particularly among disabilities that were more rare in this study. A statement regarding effect modification was added to the results section.

Reviewer #1 (Gao): “Baseline ADL score should be adjusted in the model because it was associated with both exposure and outcome.”

Response: For each functional outcome in the longitudinal component of the study, the analyses were limited to those who did not have the specific functional limitation at baseline. Essentially, this became a restricted analysis to the stratum without functional limitation and who were at risk for the development of new limitations. By narrowing the sample, we could not further adjust for the specific disability. We also did not adjust for associated functional limitations because these variables may be mediators of the association between RLS and the functional outcome.

Please feel free to contact us with any further questions or needed clarifications. We appreciate the thoughtful comments by the reviewers.

Sincerely,

Dominic J. Cirillo