Author's response to reviews

Title: Long-term prediction of changes in health status, frailty, nursing care and mortality in community-dwelling senior citizens - results from the Longitudinal Urban Cohort Ageing Study (LUCAS)

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To the Editorial Team
BMC Geriatrics
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Dear Sir or Madam

Please, find enclosed our manuscript entitled “Long-term prediction of changes in health status, frailty, nursing care and mortality in community-dwelling senior citizens - results from the Longitudinal Urban Cohort Ageing Study (LUCAS)”.

In this paper, we present a simple index of functional ability based on the self-reported answers to 11 questions originating from validated instruments. Contrary to other indices our index weighs resources and risk factor equally. We also investigate its predictive power over an eight-year span. Data source was the cohort of the Longitudinal Urban Cohort Ageing Study (LUCAS) running in Hamburg, Germany since 2000. The index is based on a theoretical model to describe and evaluate functional decline in community-dwelling senior citizens by considering not only deficits and risk factors (the clinical perspective), but also resources (the public health perspective). Another innovative aspect is the collection of information about risks and resources by self-filling questionnaire and not by clinical performance tests. This makes feasible low-cost community-wide screening.

Other aspects of the LUCAS study were described in papers published in the BMC family earlier:

(study protocol of the longitudinal LUCAS cohort)


(questionnaire development)


(study design of an RCT embedded in the LUCAS study)

We authors believe that the manuscript may be of interest to the readers of BMC Geriatrics as it contributes to the current discussion on how to successfully screen the heterogeneous population of community-dwelling senior citizens according to their functional ability status including preclinical stages of the frailty syndrome. Our manuscript answers the important question whether early signs of functional decline can be detected simply and cheaply in community-dwelling elderly, e.g. by general practitioners.

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Yours sincerely

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