Author's response to reviews

Title: A systematic review of the evidence that brain structure is related to muscle structure and their relationship to brain and muscle function in humans over the lifecourse

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

We are pleased to submit a revised version of our article entitled, “A systematic review of the evidence that brain structure is related to muscle structure and their relationship to brain and muscle function in humans over the lifecourse”.

We thank the editor for their favourable review and useful comments which we have addressed below. We hope you now feel the article is ready for publication.

Thank you for your ongoing input.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Alixe HM Kilgour

Clinical Lecturer and Honorary Specialist Registrar
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Additional Editorial Comments:

"The paper is improved and is appropriate for publication after the following minor revisions are made."

We are pleased the new version is now suitable for publication and thank the editor for their comments.

Introduction

Third paragraph. The authors should delete the following sentence: “We believe no review on this topic has taken place before.” As claims of priority should generally not be included in publications.

We have now deleted this sentence.

Methods

The “study protocol” should be updated to include the most recent literature searches and methods, and should be included with the present paper, as part of the Methods or Methods in Supplementary Materials. It does not appear appropriate to cite non-peer-reviewed methods posted online.

The weblink we cite is a link to the original protocol which was posted online in 2011 to ensure that readers can check that there was no selective outcome reporting etc which might have introduced bias by a modification of the protocol during the review. The protocol is therefore correct at the time of publishing it on the weblink. The methods section in the paper, which has now been peer reviewed, includes all the information about what we did and is largely repetitive of the protocol. If readers would like to look at the protocol to see that it matches the methods section they can look at the weblink.

This is as suggested by the PRISMA 2009 guidelines.[1]

“Item 5: PROTOCOL AND REGISTRATION.

Indicate if a review protocol exists, if and where it can be accessed (e.g., Web address) and, if available, provide registration information including the registration number.

Having a protocol can help restrict the likelihood of biased post hoc decisions in review methods, such as selective outcome reporting.”

We were unfortunately unable to register the review as all the bodies we approached would only accept systematic reviews looking for an effect (eg review of RCTs), not an association. Since then there has been a historical move to being able to publish protocols but, at the time our protocol was written, this was in its infancy and we were unable to find a suitable site, therefore we decided to publish the protocol as a weblink instead.
General

Please revise the manuscript to reduce or eliminate first-person references. For example, instead of: “We found fifteen papers which we could include” please write: “Fifteen papers were found that could be included”.

Please do this throughout the manuscript.

We have changed the text from active to passive as requested. Please see the attached manuscript with tracked changes.

Additional Editorial Requirements:

Copy Edit. We recommend that you copyedit the paper to improve the style of written English. If this is not possible, you may need to use a professional language editing service. For authors who wish to have the language in their manuscript edited by a native-English speaker with scientific expertise, BioMed Central recommends Edanz (www.edanzediting.com/bmc1). BioMed Central has negotiated a 10% discount to the fee charged to BioMed Central authors by Edanz. Use of an editing service is neither a requirement nor a guarantee of acceptance for publication.

All three of the authors on this paper are native English speakers and in fact the last author is Editor-in-Chief of a journal, so has considerable insight into acceptable style. Please let us know if there are specific sentences you are referring to or whether you are happy with this final version.

References