Author's response to reviews

**Title:** Do the Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool (MUST) and Birmingham Nutrition Risk (BNR) Score Predict Mortality in Older Hospitalised Patients?

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

Please find enclosed details of our revised article for consideration for your journal. In the light of the further reviewer’s comments we have made the following amendments to the paper:

1. Cross-reference to the different prevalence data has now been made within page 5 paragraph 1.

2. We have acknowledged within the discussion that we were unable to adjust for disease status page 13 paragraph 3. This data was not collected at the time of the audit, and we would need to obtain signed consent to go back and obtain this information.

3. No point 3 was listed

4. We have expanded the initials IQR to ‘interquartile range’ (p9 para 2) to make this measure of dispersion more understandable, and included the range for further clarity. We have removed the word ‘median’ to correct the inaccuracy highlighted by the reviewer. We believe that Spearman’s rho is an appropriate correlation test given that we are correlating a continuous, non-parametric variable with an ordinal variable (risk score); we have clarified what is being correlated with what at the end of page 8 and also in p9 para 2.

We do not believe that the inclusion of scatterplots would add to the information presented in statistical form. However, we attach these for information (we have plotted risk score vs the log of length of stay, as this variable is highly skewed and would otherwise be compressed at the base of the graphs). If you find these particularly helpful, we would of course include them in the paper.

5. Further to the reviewer’s previous comments, 2.5 years was chosen to allow adequate numbers of deaths in each group. We have included comment about this in the Methods section. The lack of data regarding short-term death is indeed a weakness, and we have now commented on this in the Discussion page 13 paragraph 3.
We hope that these revisions answer the reviewers points satisfactorily; please let us know if you would like further information or changes.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Miles D Witham