Author's response to reviews

Title: Cognitive function, social integration and mortality in a U.S. national cohort study of older adults

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Version: 2 Date: 17 April 2009

Author's response to reviews:

Dear Editors:

We thank the Editors and reviews for their consideration of our submission for publication in BMC Geriatrics as a Research Article entitled, “Cognitive Function, Social Integration and Mortality in a U.S. National Cohort Study of Older Adults.” Thanks also for the extension of time to revise until April 23, 2009. We have extensively rewritten and revised this manuscript in accordance with the reviewer’s suggestions. We list our revisions point by point on a separate page below. We now hope you will find it acceptable for publication.

Please address all correspondence to me at my email address.

Sincerely,

Frank Gillum, MD, MS
BMC Geriatrics
MS 3183876962454227
Cognitive function…
Obisesan et al.
RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS

Referee A (V. Pavlik)

General: We thank Dr. Pavlik for her careful review and helpful suggestions. We agree that the topic is important.

1. We now present the distribution of scores on two subcomponents of the SICF component A (orientation to person, place, time and verbal recall) and component B (counting backwards by 3’s) and discuss results of sensitivity analyses for the different results for these subcomponents.

2. We now mention CRP under “confounding and mediating variables in the
Methods section.

3. We now comment on the pattern of association with survival of the SICF groups and investigate this as mentioned under #1 above.

Abstract. We now mention CRP in the abstract.

P 11. We have corrected this typo.

Referee B (K. Markides)

General: We thank Dr. Markides for his careful review and helpful suggestions.

1. “…explain why…important…” “hypothesized mechanisms” The introduction has been revised accordingly.

2. “A review of current evidence…” This has been added to the Introduction.

3. “…validity of the outcome measure…” We now give Cronbach’s alpha for SICF in Methods. See also response #1 above.

4. “…not adjusted for depression/depressive symptoms…” No data were collected on depressive symptoms for participants aged 60+. We now acknowledge this in the Discussion under limitations.

5. “Table 1…include the comparison group…” We have added these rows to the table.

Referee C (M.V. Zunzunegui)

General: We thank Dr. Zunzunegui for her careful review and helpful suggestions.

“…hypothesis not grounded…” We now ground the hypothesis on previous research.

“…mechanisms…” We now mention this in the Discussion section.

Abstract… We have rewritten the background section as suggested.

“…justification of main hypothesis…” We have added this (see above).

“…comparison of…included…excluded…” We have added this in limitations (Discussion).

“…cut-off points…explicit…” We have added these.

“…mediators…not referenced…” We have added these references.

“non-religious…” We have deleted this typo.

“Why interactions tested…” We have revised this section.

“…inflammation…” We have added this to the introduction.

“Table 1” See response above.
“Table 2…overadjustment” We address this issue by presenting bivariate results (no adjustement) and a parsimonious model plus an expanded model.

“low social integration…” We have added this as suggested.

“CRP…” We now acknowledge this.

“…limitations of social integration…” We have added this.

Referee 4 (Suzuki)

General: We thank Dr. Suzuki for his careful review and helpful suggestions. We agree that our work has possibilities to contribute to steady progress in the research area.

1. We have revised the background section (see above).
2. We now compare those included and excluded (see above).
3. We now include CRP in background discussion.
4. We have expanded the discussion of mechanisms in Discussion.
5. We have revised and checked Table 1 and added a comment on Figure 1.
6. We have revised tables and figures as suggested.