Author’s response to reviews

Title: Procalcitonin and procalcitonin kinetics for diagnosis and prognosis of intravascular catheter-related bloodstream infections in selected critically ill patients: a prospective observational study

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Author's response to reviews:

Cover letter

We would like to thank the reviewers for their comments and suggestions. A significant effort has been undertaken in order to comply with every comment proposed.

Reviewer 1

Major comments

1. Done. The sentence has been included in last part of the results section in the abstract after reporting major findings of the study.

2. Done. AUC results have been included in the results section (page 12).

3. Done. The data required have been included in the results section (page 12).

4. Done. Information required is provided in a new subsection (microbiological data, p 10).

Minor comments

1. Done. Test for AUC comparison is provided in the statistical analysis
Reviewer 2

General comments

We agree with the reviewer’s comments and his thoughts and concerns are discussed in detail in the discussion section, page 15 & 16 of the revised manuscript.

Specific comments

1. The issue is discussed in page 6, where the 2 studies do not provide sufficient information regarding setting of investigation.

2. Done, see answer to general comments.

3. Limitations of the study include such concerns (p 15, 16) and information regarding patients with a rise in PCT serum levels without CRBSI are provided in p 12.

4. Since we decided to reduce the length of manuscript according to other reviewers’ suggestions, we decided to retain table 1, depicting our patients’ characteristics, instead of presenting such data within main text. Moreover, its title has been changed in order to include ICU mortality and LOS as well.

5. Done. Data are provided in microbiological subsection p 10.

6. Figures 2 and 4 have not been omitted since we consider visual inspection of longitudinal PCT alterations over time of significant value for supporting clarity of our findings, whereas we had to add SDs as well, according to reviewer’s 3 suggestions.

Reviewer 3

Major concerns
We tried to comply with general concerns of the reviewer concerning study design and patients’ characteristics, adding his comments in the discussion section (p 15, 16). We think that the revised manuscript has highlighted the fact that we recruited a rather homogeneous cohort of patients and more studies including complex patients need to be undertaken for external validation of our results.

Concerning type of isolated bacteria page 14 includes relevant information and comments.

Names of Groups 1 and 2 have been changed according to the reviewer’s suggestions. Pages 6 and 7 discuss criteria of diagnosis and are also included in table 2.

Minor comments

1. Done. Title has been changed.


3. Done.

4. Antibiotics recommended are stated in page 7, first paragraph and proportion of appropriate treatment is discussed in a new subsection (microbiological data), p. 10.

5. Done. This limitation is discussed in page 16.

6. Done. Moreover we tried to reduce length of the discussion omitting several data from other studies. However, concerns of the reviewer about limitations of the study have been added, increasing thus, length of the discussion.

7. Done. P.17 2nd paragraph.

8. References done.


10. Table 2. Done.

11. Table 5. Done in revised Table 4.