Author's response to reviews

Title: Neuropsychological Outcomes in Adults Commencing Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Treatment in South Africa: A Prospective Study

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We thank the reviewer for the careful consideration of the above manuscript. The comments provided by the reviewer have been incorporated into changes in the manuscript in the following ways:

- Regarding the issue of characterisation of HIV-1 sub-types: The reviewer quite correctly points out that we did not isolate HIV-1 sub-type in this sample, and as such, cannot make assertions about clade. While several local studies of HIV-1 sub-type in Cape Town have demonstrated that clade C is present in approximately 85-90% of patients attending primary health care clinics akin the one utilised in this study. We have de-emphasised the issue of clade/sub-type from this manuscript, in the abstract, introduction and discussion.

- Regarding the issue of data highlighting the role of the CPE score: The data presented by Tozzi at IAS 2011 suggest that there has been little change in NPZ scores across times from the mid-1990’s to 2010. He concluded that underlying neuropathological mechanisms remain unchanged, despite the use of HAART, and potentially in the era where regimens with higher CPE scores are used. We have updated and revised the introduction to speak to these issues accordingly. We have also include more information on CPE as suggested.
- Regarding the issue of domain-specific impairment: The reviewer quite correctly points out that this would add interest to the manuscript. We have added this analysis and discussion to the manuscript, and have added a figure demonstrating rates of impairment by domain pre- and post-HAART.

- We have thoroughly reviewed the manuscript for typographical errors, including those highlighted by the reviewer.

We trust that these revisions have improved the manuscript, and hope that you will consider publishing it.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

John A. Joska