Author's response to reviews

Title: Severe strongyloidiasis: a systematic review of case reports

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

we have revised our manuscript “Severe strongyloidiasis: a systematic review of case reports” in light of the reviewers’ comments. Please find below our replies to their remarks.

Referee 1 (Sitara Ajjampur).

- Subheading “countries”: The paragraph has been revised in accordance to the reviewer’s remarks, in order to highlight the proportion of reports from regions/individual countries and, among low endemic countries, proportion of immigrants/veterans. Figure 2 has been deleted.
- Risk factors: now each factor is examined separately and proportion is shown. The requirement for table 1 is now explained in the text.
- Diagnosis: only a few authors describe the type of serology used, therefore we couldn’t add this data in table 2 (although we admit it would be interesting).
- Therapy: figure 4 and table 4 have been deleted. Data previously reported in figure 4 have been included in table 3.
- Outcome: “no significant difference” was edited as required (“similar fatality rate”).
- Discussion/conclusion: it has been revised, adding suggestions on management of at risk groups (screening and treatment).

Minor revisions:
- Background: the sentence “to our knowledge no systematic review…” has been deleted.
- The term “aspecific” was deleted.
- Method: the sentence “me made systematic…” was changed to “we carried out…”
- Results: “in fact they all died” under therapy subheading was revised into “all 42 of 244 patients who did not receive therapy died”, now in the outcome subheading.

Discretionary revisions:

Risk and therapy sections have been revised and abbreviated.

Referee 2 (Antonio Montresor).

As suggested, we have modified the manuscript deleting many details of secondary relevance, and focusing on main findings.

Although we preferred not to summarize the points indicated by the reviewer in a specific table or chapter, now they are presented more directly in the text. However, the proportion of cases in which strongyloidiasis was investigated before administration of corticosteroids was not added, because in most cases it is not clearly stated whether it was done or not. Point 5 (outcome with different drugs - best therapy) has been added to table 3.

With “risk factors” we meant “risk to development of HS/DS in infected patients”, but we agree that the subtitle could cause confusion, therefore the subheading “Risk factors” has been changed to “triggers for the development of HS/DS”.

Conclusions have been revised in order to

- Stress the severity of HS and DS
- Suggest groups of patients who should be screened
- Suggest that it would be worth to treat some patients at high risk, irrespective of the result of screening test

Minor points:

- Page 3. It’s been edited according to the reviewer’s suggestion
- Page 5. The “countries” section has been revised and abbreviated, deleting references to papers already cited

Dora Buonfrate on behalf of authors.