**Author's response to reviews**

**Title:** Immunomodulatory intervention in sepsis by multidrug-resistant Pseudomonas aeruginosa with thalidomide: an experimental study

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**Author's response to reviews:** see over
Editor-in-Chief,

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Athens, February 26th 2005

Dear Sir,

I wish to thank you for the review of our article MS 2567600650698379 entitled “Immunomodulatory intervention in sepsis by multidrug-resistant *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* with thalidomide: an experimental study”. Please find attached the revised version of our manuscript according to the suggestions of the referees. The corrections made are as follows, in order of appearance in the revised manuscript:

- All corrections to the style of writing have been performed, as suggested by the second referee, in pg2, ln17-18; pg3, ln7-10; pg3, ln14-16; in pg4, ln21; in pg6, ln28; in pg7, ln11; and in pg7, ln22-24.

- The correct total number of applied animals is 109. The total of 115 was false from our part. It has been corrected both in the abstract and in pg3, ln23 of the revised manuscript. As a consequence, it is evident that no rats were excluded from the study.

- The applied type of seed oil was linseed oil, as given in pg4, ln15 and ln22 of the revised manuscript. It was administered in animals of group B at the same dose and by the same route as in animals of group C. This has been added in pg4, ln23-25 of the revised manuscript, according to the suggestion of the first referee.

- To avoid misunderstanding for the time of blood sampling and animal sacrifice, an explanatory phrase has been added in p4, ln27-28 of the revised manuscript, in reply to the first referee.

- The second referee is wondering for the selection of the 5-hour time interval post bacterial challenge as the most appropriate for blood sampling. There is no doubt that experiments performed with endotoxin challenge clearly indicate the first hour as the time point of the increase of TNFα in blood. However, experience with complete pathogens, and particularly with *P. aeruginosa*, is lacking. To alleviate this, the pathogen was inoculated in several rats that were sacrificed in groups at hour-time intervals so as to select the 5-hour time point.
A short sentence has been added in pg5, ln2-5 of the revised manuscript, as a reply to the second referee.

- The first referee is wondering about the probable statistic effect of one rat of group C behaving as an outlier. Survival analysis has been repeated after subtracting that animal and results are provided in pg6, ln23-26 of the revised manuscript.
- No diarrhea was noted upon administration of linseed oil, as stated in pg6, ln27 of the revised manuscript.
- Clinical failure of monoclonal antibodies has been outlined in pg7, ln5-8 of the revised manuscript, as suggested by the first referee. A novel reference, no9, has also been added. The sequential enumeration of the rest of references has been changed accordingly.
- The probable existence of other pathways of action of thalidomide than that of inhibition of TNFα has been added in pg8, ln7-10 of the revised manuscript according to the suggestion of the first referee.
- The revised manuscript has been thoroughly checked for its format according to your guidelines.

We hope that the above revision might have ended in a manuscript fulfilling the requirements for publication in *BMC Infectious Diseases*.

Looking forward to your reply,

Yours sincerely,

E. J. Giamarellos-Bourboulis, MD, PhD