Author's response to reviews

Title: Comparative Study Among Patients with Chronic Hepatitis C Genotypes 1 and 3 Referred to Treatment.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
To
Rikki Graham PhD
Assistant Editor
BMC-series journals

MS: 9079354322028216
Comparative Study Among Patients with Chronic Hepatitis C Genotypes 1 and 3 Referred to Treatment.
Aline Vigani, Maria Pavan, Raquel Tozzo, Eduardo Gonçales, Adriana Feltrin, Viviane Fais, Neiva Gonçales and Fernando Gonçales Jr

Dear Dr. Graham:

We are writing you to submit our revised version of the manuscript “Comparative Study of Patients with Chronic Hepatitis C Virus Infection Due to Genotypes 1 and 3 Referred to Treatment in Southeast Brazil” (9079354322028216) and to, once again, thank you for considering it for publication. We believe that the reviewer’s comments highlighted relevant points of our work and we appreciated the chance to address those concerns.

The authors have carefully reviewed the comments made by the panel of reviewers and responses to each of the reviewers are listed below.

Response to Editor’s comments:
• The paper was reviewed by two people with fluency in English.
• We included a “Competing interests”
• We included an Authors’ contributions section

Response to Reviewer 1’s comments:

Reviewer's report
Title: Comparative Study Among Patients with Chronic Hepatitis C Genotypes 1 and 3 Referred to Treatment.
Version: 1 Date: 3 July 2008
Reviewer: Seyed-Moayed Alavian

Reviewer's report:
The method is not appropriate:
We need to more information in enrolment of subjects. Is any follow up period without therapy? How many cases with co-infection with HBV and HIV had excluded. The
method of genotyping is totally insufficient. Method of detection of cryoglobulin is not clear.

- The methodology used for this study was clarified throughout the revised manuscript. In brief, the follow up period was since the patients presents at our hospital to at least six months after finishing treatment. This is described on Page 5, first paragraph, 8th line. We do not have information about how many cases were excluded, only patients included in the study were accounted for. The laboratory methodology used for genotyping and determining cryoglobulinemia was clarified on Page 5, second and third paragraphs.

The authors had mentioned that they treated the patients with two different protocoloh (Pegylated and Conventional Interferon-Base) in Genotype 1 and 3. If they reviewed the data before starting the treatment, why they mentioned the treatment groups. It is not related to subject.

- The data were collected before, during and after treatment. The patients were followed up during this period. In Brazil, the standard treatment for patients with genotype 1 with pegylated interferon plus ribavirin and genotype 3 with conventional interferon plus ribavirin.

The questionnaire probably was incomplete and did not cover the whole the risk factors. There is not any data regarding sexual history, and …

- Our questionnaire focused on the major risk factors, sexual contact is not a major factor so we chose not to included sexual history.

Subtyping of HCV genotypes is not available. Result has many errors such as: A total of patients 284 and the number of patients with one risk factor plus no risk factor = 257 and if we add 11 with two risk factor=???. It is obvious that there is conflict.

- A total of 283 patients were considered to enter in the study but patients with genotype 2 and 4 were excluded from analysis (Page 7, first paragraph). So the total of patients analysed were 275. Blood transfusion 71 patients, intravenous energetic drug 53, intravenous illicit drug 44, 89 no risk factor identified, others 29 – this total is. Eleven patients had two risk factors.

There are many errors in English writing such as: Page 10 line 8, criglobulins. Page 2 line 4, set out to.

- The manuscript was reviewed to correct the language

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

- The manuscript was reviewed to correct the language

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.
Response to Reviewer 2’s comments:

Reviewer's report

Title: Comparative Study Among Patients with Chronic Hepatitis C Genotypes 1 and 3 Referred to Treatment.

Version: 1 Date: 8 July 2008

Reviewer: Mindie Nguyen, M.D., M.A.S.

Reviewer's report:

The paper is of significant interest since it reviews outcomes of treatment in patients with genotype 3. In large registration trials, genotype 3 pts were grouped together with genotype 2 cases. However, we have slowly learned that genotype 3 patients may not respond as well as genotype 2 to current IFN-based therapy. This study primarily compared genotype 3 and 1 because of the very small number of genotype 2 cases in the cohort. The paper however should be reanalysed and revised substantially to be useful to readers:

1. SVR for each group should be reported, not just OR for SVR.
   - The SVR rate for each group was showed on Page 8, second paragraph.

2. Many factors that are well-known to affect SVR should be described in details: completion rate, dose reduction (amount and duration), race of study participants (patients of African descent may have much lower SVR).
   - We do not have information about dose reduction or race of patients. The treatment was initiated in 180 patients and all of them finished the treatment (page 8, second paragraph).

3. The footnotes in both tables are too busy. Suggest moving some of those to text.
   - We changed both tables and chose to include the relevant information as part of the text.

4. Suggest separation of table 1 into 2 tables with one describing baseline characteristics and another to describe potential associations.
   - We changed Table 2, we remove OD e CI.

5. Table 2 seems to describe distribution of histologic findings rather than results of logistic regression.
   - We changed Table 2 title (page 18)

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published.
   - The manuscript was reviewed to check for language accuracy and quality

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
No personal or financial relationship.
We appreciate your consideration of these revisions, and remain excited at the opportunity to publish this manuscript in this respected journal. We look forward to any additional discussion required to address your editorial concerns and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,
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