Author's response to reviews

Title: r.hu-Erythropoietin (EPO) treatment of pre-ESRD patients slows the rate of progression of renal decline

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* STUDY DESIGN clarified: "This is a prospective, observational-clinical case-control study of patients treated for renal anemia."

* Patient demographics added in METHODS section: "The mean age of patients was 67.3 +/- 0.05 (Mean +/- SEM) years at the start of the observation, 2 were African Americans and one was Hispanic, 6 patients were women and 7 had type II diabetes mellitus. The exact pathology for the renal failure was not known in the majority of patients, but one was known to have polycystic kidney disease."

* METHODS: The unit of "bicarbonate" clarified: "...greater than 22 mmol/L by...

* Non-significant p values and also the statistical spelt out in the RESULTS section: "...p = 0.75 by 2 tailed paired Student’s t test..." and "...after (p = 0.71 by Fisher’s 2 tailed exact test..."

* The unit of hematocrit changed from "mg%" to "%" uniformly.

* The number of patients and data handling for the one lost to follow-up corrected in the METHODS section: "...dialysis or death (there was none) or lost to follow up (1/18) whose data were censored..."

* ...made the paper less authoritative (DISCUSSION): "...While this is only an observational study from the clinical practice with a relatively small number of patients it could point towards the necessity for a larger prospective study designed to answer the question raised here whether the administration of EPO in the pre-ESRD population can indeed reverse or halt a process of continuous renal decline."