Author's response to reviews

Title: A cross-sectional study of the nutritional status of community-dwelling people with idiopathic Parkinson's disease

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for your time and effort in reviewing our manuscript. We wish you to consider this revised manuscript for publication in BMC Neurology.


Responses to the reviewer’s comments are given below:-

Reviewer: Yoshihiro Miyake
Reviewer's report:
This is a well written paper.
Only a minor point:
1. Page 8 Lines 16-17: I cannot understand the sentence “Disease duration … in our cohort.”
Were UPDRS score and Hoehn and Yahr stage significantly related to under-nutrition?
Reply: This was a typographical error. This sentence has been correct and now reads: ‘Greater age and longer disease duration were significantly associated with under-nutrition in our cohort, though UPDRS score and Hoehn and Yahr stage were not.’

Reviewer: Ilana Schlesinger
Reviewer's report:
The manuscript, a cross-sectional study of the nutritional status of community dwelling people with idiopathic Parkinson’s disease by A. Jaafar et al. Addresses an important non-
motor phenomenon in PD, under-nutrition. This is a community-based cross-sectional study done in the UK that assessed nutritional status and PD using standard measures.

A few comments:

Minor Essential Revisions

1. It is stated that "UPDRS score was recorded from patient responses to verbal questioning" though part III of the UPDRS requires neurological examination. What was actually done? Did examiners undergo training before performing this exam?

Reply: We have added to the manuscript to clarify this point. Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust has a dedicated multi-disciplinary PD service. Patients were examined and assessed by a member of the study team. This was either a PD nurse specialist or a physician with an interest in movement disorders, who had undergone UPDRS training. The UPDRS was administered in full according to standard protocols.

2. Due to the limited resources nutritional data were only collected from a sample of PD patients. It would be helpful to note how this sample was selected in order not to cause undue bias.

Reply: It was planned to see all patients, but we were unable to visit all patients to collect nutritional data due a lack of time and resources. In practice this meant that patients who were last on the list to be seen did not have their nutritional data collected. The order patients were seen in was largely arbitrary. We compare those examined to those not examined in Table 1. There were no significant differences between the two groups. The results section has been updated with this information.

3. In the discussion it is stated that "UPDRS score and Hoehn and Yahr stage were significantly associated with under-nutrition in our cohort." To my understanding the data shown in Table 2 do not support this conclusion. Indeed no significant difference was found between PD patients with BMI below 20 with those with BMI above 20 in terms of their Hoehn & Yahr stage and UPDRS.

Reply: This point was also noted by Reviewer 1, and has been clarified. This was a typographical error, which has now been corrected.

Discretionary Revisions

4. There was no association between BMI and UPDRS but there was an association between BMI and disease duration. Since UPDRS increases with disease duration this is an unexpected finding and the authors may want to comment on this.

Reply: Changes made as suggested.

We thank you in advance for your time in re-considering this manuscript and look forward to your reply.

Yours Sincerely

Prof. Richard Walker