Author's response to reviews

Title: Pregabalin versus gabapentin in the management of peripheral neuropathic pain associated with post-herpetic neuralgia and diabetic neuropathy: A cost effectiveness analysis for the Greek healthcare setting

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With regards to the issues raised, please find below our itemized response.

1. The study uses a dynamic simulation model to predict costs and outcomes for each treatment arm. All data regarding treatment efficacy and pre-treatment pain scores were derived from published studies (which are referenced in the text). Therefore, ethical approvals for this case were deemed as non-relevant.

2. Regarding your inquiry about the provision of informed consent by the participating physicians, we would like to note the following:

The importance of informed consent is acknowledged by all the authors of this paper, and this issue was extensively discussed during the design of the study. The process of data collection via the interviews included provision of oral information to the interviewees (physicians) who were given the opportunity to ask for any additional clarifications they deemed as necessary in order to ensure their voluntary and uncoerced participation.

This information referred to:
- the voluntary character of physician participation
- the fact that no risk and burden were involved in participation
- the aim and the scope of the survey
- the description of the methodology
- the right of the participants to withdraw at any time of the interview
- the nature of the data collected, i.e. averages, frequencies and percentages of
the total number of the physician’s or the pain clinic’s patients, a process via which no individual patient data were recorded and no identification of personal information was possible

After the completion of this procedure, and due to the willingness of the majority of the informed persons.centers to participate, the researchers considered that that written and documented consent was not a necessary requirement for this particular research. This decision was enforced by the following factors:

- there was no inequality in the power relationship between the participants and the researchers, as the interviewees were persons fully competent to consent
- the research results would have no particular impact on specific communities
- there was no issue of possible discrimination or stigmatization arising from participation in this research
- the data collected, as reported above, was in a form that no individual data or sensitive personal information was gathered or used
- no identification was possible

3. A disclosure on competing interests will be added in the last section of the manuscript

4. A statement describing author contributions will be also added in the last section of the manuscript