Author's response to reviews

Title: Design of the EXercise Intervention after Stem cell Transplantation (EXIST) study: a randomized controlled trial to evaluate the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of a individualized high intensity physical exercise program on fitness and fatigue in patients with multiple myeloma or (non-) Hodgkin’s lymphoma treated with high dose chemotherapy and autologous stem cell transplantation.

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear Editor,

We've made the following changes to our manuscript:

1. We've removed the visible vertical lines from our tables;

2. We've changed "The Netherlands" to "the Netherlands" (page 1 and 3);

3. We've deleted the enter between "VU University" and "Medical Center, Amsterdam, the Netherlands" (page 1);

4. We've changed "Maxima Medical Center, department of Sport Medicine, Veldhoven, the Netherlands" to "Department of Sports Medicine, Maxima Medical Center, Veldhoven, the Netherlands" (page 1);

5. We've included "the" before Maxima Medical Center (page 7 line 2) and the abbreviation of Maxima Medical Center (MMC);

6. We've changed "standard care" to "usual care" (page 8);

7. We rewrote the following sentence: "After the baseline measurements a randomization will take place conform a stratified block randomization method using a validated software package" to "After the baseline measurement a
randomization will take place conform a stratified block randomization method with a block size of 4 and by using a validated software package" (Page 9);

8. We've changed "control arm" to "conrol group" (page 11)

9. We've deleted the following sentences: "The statement refers to aspects of fatigue experienced during the previous days. Higher scores indicate a higher degree of fatigue"(page 13)

10. We've restored names in the references (ref 26: van MW --> van Mechelen W; ref 41: van BE --> van Breda E; ref 64: De G, I --> De Groot, I).

11. In table 1 we've switched the order of the aims of the training and deleted the aim "promote independence". Also we set the duration of the counselling session on 15 minutes.

12. In table 2 we've corrected some typographic errors (superscripts)

13. In the figures we've changed "SCT" in "ASCT"

14. In the figure legends, we've included "ASCT: autologous stem cell transplantation".

Yours sincerely

Saskia Persoon, MSc