Author's response to reviews

Title: Bioelectrical impedance phase angle as a prognostic indicator in breast cancer

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KINDLY SEE THE REVISIONS BELOW IN CAPS

Reviewer: Aluisio J D Barros

Reviewer's report:

Most of the comments presented were either accepted, or fair justifications for not doing so were presented. I still believe that using standardized values for phase angle would improve the results of the Kaplan-Meier survival analysis, but I accept the authors’ decision. There is however one outstanding issue, described below.

Major compulsory revisions

1. The question about non-linearity of phase angle effect was not addressed in the authors’ reply. It is unlikely that phase angle has a linear relationship with mortality hazard as one may well think that a unit change in the low end of values has a larger effect than in the higher end of the spectrum. So, this needs to be tested by either including a squared phase angle term in the Cox regression, or alternatively, a log transformation could be explored. AS SUGGESTED, WE TESTED THE LINEARITY OF PHASE ANGLE. AS EXPECTED, IT WAS NOT NORMALLY DISTRIBUTED. WE THEREFORE USED A Squared PHASE ANGLE TERM IN COX REGRESSION, THE DETAILS OF WHICH ARE INCLUDED UNDER THE RESULTS SECTION OF THE REVISED PAPER.