Author's response to reviews

Title: "Early identification of brain injury in infants with hypoxic ischemic encephalopathy at high risk for severe impairments: accuracy of MRI performed in the first days of life"

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Sir

Thank you very much for your comments. Below we comment point by point the main concerns. As suggested we have included some comments that we addressed in the cover letter but not in the manuscript

1. Most readers will want to know how your classification of HIE differed from the Sarnat score.

   We have added the main characteristics of the scale we have used in the section “Methods”. See last three phrases in page number 4.

   “This Classification system is a modification of the grading system described by Sarnat that focuses in the level of alertness. It sub classifies moderate HIE in A or B if seizures are present or absent respectively and, severe HIE in A or B if brain function is preserved or abnormal respectively.”

2. The readers will be as interested as the reviewer was in the patient with severe encephalopathy who had a good recovery

   Please notice that we have added the findings of the newborn with severe HIE and two normal sequential scans (line 7 on page 11).

   “In the 6 patients with normal early scans, the second MR study didn’t show any pathological findings. Surprisingly one of these patients had a severe encephalopathy; this infant was overcooled when he was referred to our hospital (he was 31ºC on admission) and the sequential scans were performed at 99 and 213 hours of life. He has been followed up and at 26 months of age and scores on Bayley III cognitive and motor scale were 85 and 94 respectively.”

3. Also readers will be as interested as one reviewer was as to whether there was any correlation between sentinel events and patterns of injuries

   Please notice that we have made a further remark on this issue in line 4 on page 8).

   “We have not found any relationship between the patterns of injury and perinatal variables such as the presence of sentinel events (data not shown).”