Author's response to reviews

Title: The relationship of systemic inflammation to prior hospitalization in adult patients with cystic fibrosis

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Author's response to reviews:

Many thanks for inviting us to revise and re-submit our manuscript for possible publication in BMC Pulmonary. In a point-by-point format, we have addressed the concerns raised by Dr. Hamblett. All the changes have been highlighted in red. We hope the changes meet your approval.

Reviewer 1:
1. The title needs to include “prior” in front of hospitalization.

RESPONSE: The title has been modified as suggested.

2. Statistical methods - there is mention of a logistic regression whereby prior hospitalization is the outcome; this model is not presented (no ORs etc), nor do I think it should be as it is better to present the differences in biomarker values between those with and without hosp history (as is done in table 3). Also, there is still references to risk factors for hospitalization.

RESPONSE: In the Statistical Analysis section of Methods, we have deleted references to the logistic regression analysis. As suggested by the reviewer, we have retained Table 3 as is. We have removed references to risk factors for hospitalization.

3. Discussion – throughout the term hospitalization should have the word “prior” or “history of” inserted for clarity.

RESPONSE: Mentions of hospitalization have been clarified with the terms “prior,” “history,” or “previously” in the Discussion section.

4. Conclusions – the first sentence is not accurate – associations with history of hospitalization and fev were found – this was not a longitudinal study and therefore you cannot say that associations were found with disease progression. Similar comment to conclusions in the abstract.

RESPONSE: The first sentences of the Conclusions sections of the manuscript
and abstract have been adjusted to replace “disease progression.”

5. Table 3 – description and column headings should state prior hosp

RESPONSE: Mentions of hospitalization in the title and column headings of Table 3 are now preceded with “previously.”

6. The authors state that a multivariable model was performed to identify the set of biomarkers most associated with FEV; they claim this is in Table 2, but in fact this is different than the model suggested. The paper would be enriched with this analysis but it is up to the authors whether to perform.

RESPONSE: We performed a multivariable analysis to determine the INDEPENDENT relationship of plasma biomarkers to FEV1 adjusted for age, pseudomonal status, and history of hospitalization. These data are presented in Table 2 and described in the statistical section.

We hope these changes meet your approval.