Author's response to reviews

Title: Prescribing cycle training intensity from the six-minute walk test for patients with COPD

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear Dr Phillips,

Thank you for sending our manuscript for peer review. The only revision required by the reviewer is stated below:
"My only hesitation is that the two tests are not measured in the COPD subjects in a random order. The authors explained why, but I suggest to do a ther measurement to get an idea of the exercise capacity and than start with a random order of 6mwt and ict".

As the reviewer stated, the manuscript explained that the six-minute walk test (6MWT) and the cycle ergometer exercise could not be randomised because the results of the 6MWT were required to calculate the intensity of exercise for the constant-load cycle exercise i.e p7 line 6-9 reads:

"All participants will perform two 6MWTs and a ten-minute constant-load cycle exercise in that order. The 6MWT will be performed prior to the cycle exercise as the results of the 6MWT will be required to calculate the intensity of cycle exercise."

This study does not aim to compare two tests but rather to use a test (the 6MWT) as the basis for exercise prescription on a cycle ergometer. The study will examine if the intensity for cycle exercise, calculated from a 6MWT, achieves an adequate training intensity on a cycle ergometer. As such we will not be comparing two tests of exercise capacity (i.e we are not performing an incremental cycle test [ICT] as the reviewer states) and therefore, random order of testing is not appropriate for this study. In addition, in clinical practice the 6MWT would always need to be performed before cycle exercise, so that an appropriate exercise prescription for cycle exercise could be calculated from the 6MWT results.

We feel that the use of an abbreviation for the incremental cycle test (ICT) when it was discussed in the background to the study may have led to a misinterpretation that this test was being used in the study. We have replaced all the ICT abbreviations with "incremental cycle test" to add clarity.

The manuscript has been checked for formatting to ensure it meets the requirements of BMC Pulmonary Medicine.

We hope that you will consider the manuscript ready for publication.

Best wishes,

Jenny Alison