Author's response to reviews

Title: Influence of the incremental step size in work rate on exercise response and gas exchange in patients with pulmonary hypertension: a prospective controlled study

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Ref. to manuscript 2831382721540916 - Influence of the incremental step size in work rate on exercise response and gas exchange in patients with pulmonary hypertension: a prospective controlled study.

Dear editor,

Thank you again for the helpful remarks concerning the above mentioned manuscript.

We altered the manuscript according to the remarks as follows:

To reviewer Thierry Le Tourneau

1. The patient with CPETH was removed. However, removing this patient did not result in any change in the results and interpretations. In case the editor wants to re-include the patient in order to increase the sample size this would be easily possible. In addition, we added a section providing the diagnoses of all patients to the method section (study subjects).
2. We corrected the paper in the mentioned way resulting in comparisons of Jones protocol and all NYHA protocols.
3. We added the requested table (table 1). Reasons for termination are mentioned in the chapter “Results”.

Minor revisions:

1. Echocardiographic results were added in the method section
2. None of the patient was under oxygen at home; all tests were done on room air. We included this part in the method section.

To reviewer Sue Revill:

1. The figure 1 (mentioned in the unrevised manuscript) was deleted. We decided not include this figure due to its limited relevance. We further clarified the randomization order in the method section as well as in the results. We reached an equal split.
2. The question is now answered in the method section. Patients were encouraged to exercise only prior to exercise to minimize a bias. Patients were encouraged to reach maximal exhaustion.
3. All patients were naïve to CPET (included to the method section). All patients underwent the test during a second opinion visit in our centre. This explains the pre-existing medical therapies in contrast to a test naivety.
4. The answer is now included in the revised manuscript. The protocol was blinded to the patient. We discussed the resulting bias in the discussion as a part of study limitations.

Analysis:

1. All figures and table 2 include now the CI’s.
2. There was systematic effect comparing day one and two. We included this in the results as well as in the discussion.
3. Reasons for exercise termination are now included in the results.

Minor essential revisions:

1. Is now re-phased
2. Is now corrected
3. Is now clarified in the manuscript
4. Is now clarified
5. Is now re-phased
6. Is now corrected.

If you have any further question or request please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours

Sven Glaeser, M.D.