Author's response to reviews

Title: Predictors of web-based follow-up response in the Prevention of Low Back Pain the Military Trial

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Associate Editor's comments:

Could the authors check to be sure that their description of methods, their results, and Table 1 are consistent? Unless I am wrong the FABQ and ODQ are mentioned in the Methods section but do not appear again in the Analysis section, Results, or Table. Likewise, in the Methods section the PCS and MCS components of the SF-12 are mentioned but they do not appear to be later examined as separate components.

What we stated in the analysis section within the Methods is accurate. (i.e., "The independent variables considered as potential predictors of response rate included psychological variables (BDI, FPQ, BBQ, STAI), health status and physical activity (SF-12, smoking status, level of physical activity, BMI), and the attention/relationship effect (received physical/USI examination or PSEP)"). In other words, the AE is correct that we did not include the FABQ and ODQ in our analysis. Although these measures were included as baseline measures for the overall trial, they were not important for the purpose of this analysis. As a result, we have eliminated the corresponding descriptions for these items from the Methods section to avoid any confusion. Thank you for pointing this out.

The one exception to the AE’s comment is that we did intend to report and consider the SF-12 PCS and MCS components separately. However, after double checking, we realize we included the SF-12 Total score in the original analysis rather than breaking them out individually by subscale as potential predictors. Therefore, we re-analyzed the data to consider the SF-12 subscales separately. The influence on the analysis was very minor (with the minor changes reflected in the manuscript and tables using track changes and
highlights); however, we thought it was important to correct the analysis to be consistent with the theoretical hypotheses that were established from the outset. We did not include the FABQ and ODQ in the re-analysis to remain consistent with our original intent.

At least once the word "Solders" appears, rather than Soldiers.

The manuscript was spell checked to insure this was corrected in any instance where it appeared.