Author's response to reviews

Title: Assessing Stability and Change of Four Performance Measures: A Longitudinal Study Evaluating Outcome Following Total Hip and Knee Arthroplasty

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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Dear Editorial Team:

RE: Revision of Manuscript Based on Reviewer Feedback  
“Assessing Stability and Change of Four Performance Measures: A Longitudinal Study Evaluating Outcome Following Total Hip and Knee Arthroplasty”

Enclosed please find our revised manuscript for consideration of publication in BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders. As recommended, a point-by-point list of the reviewer’s insightful comments and our response and corresponding changes in the manuscript follows.

**Responses to Reviewer’s Comments**

**Major Compulsory Revisions**

**Comment:** Readers would likely appreciate a clearer representation of the distribution of the variables studied. Authors are urged to add frequency distribution graphs of each of the tests they studied.

**Response:** Histograms depicting the preoperative scores of each of the four performance measures (self-paced walk test, stair test, timed up and go test, and the 6 minute walk test) have been added. Please refer to Figures 2–5. Corresponding text has been added to the beginning of the ‘Results’ section.

**Comment:** For the fast self-paced walk test, the dimension that is being tested is the subject’s velocity or speed of walking. Speed may have superior distributional properties and may perform better than time. Authors may wish to repeat some of their analyses on the fast walk test, using velocity rather than time.

**Response:** Although we agree with the reviewer’s point, given the choice, we would prefer to continue to report time in the paper based on clinical rationale. In reporting the minimal detectable change in seconds, it was based on clinical experience that patients and clinicians are eager to know the change in time to complete the 40-meter test without making a computation. In addition, it enabled the authors to express the results in a uniform metric for three of the four tests.

**Minor Essential Revisions**

**Comment:** It would help readers to include the number of subjects in Table 1.
Response: The number of subjects (n=150) has been added to Table 1.

Comment: Please provide the distance walked in Table 2, under Fast Self-Paced Walk Time. This can be omitted if authors show walking speed.

Response: The distance completed in the Fast Self-Paced Walk Test was added to Table 2.

Comment: Please define all acronyms in Tables (e.g. TUG in Tables 2, 3, 4)

Response: Instead of defining the acronym for the TUG, to be consistent with the format used for the other measures, TUG was written out in full in the Tables. In Table 2, additional definitions were added for seconds (s) and meters (m).

Discretionary Revisions (which the authors can choose to ignore)
Comment: Authors may wish to add data to Table 5, showing the actual values of the baseline tests among completers and non completers of the study protocol.

Response: We have stated in the text, in the results section, that there was no significant difference between the completers and non completers in terms of the Six Minute Walk Test and the Stair Test where a substantial number of the patients were unable to complete the test. Accordingly, we prefer to leave this table as is.

Thank you for all your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

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