Author’s response to reviews

Title: Patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis have an altered circulatory Aggrecan Profile

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor of BMC musculoskeletal disorders

Thank you for the positive feedback for our manuscript “Patients with rheumatoid arthritis have an altered circulatory aggrecan profile“

We have made all the corrections suggested by the editors. These are specified in the rebuttal point-by-point below.

We hope that by these minor additional corrections to the already extensive revision, that our manuscript is acceptable for publication in BMC musculoskeletal disorders

Sincerely

Morten A. Karsdal, MSC, PHD, corresponding author.

Point-by-point rebuttal.

We strongly encourage you to include an Acknowledgements section between the Authors contributions section and Reference list. Please acknowledge anyone who contributed towards the study by making substantial contributions to conception, design, acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data, or who was involved in drafting the manuscript or revising it critically for important intellectual content, but who does not meet the criteria for authorship.

We have more carefully described the individual contributions of the authors.
We have included an extended version of the description of the contributions by stating:
” JCR designed and performed the western blot analysis in the study, and participated in drafting of the manuscript. EUS measured anti-CCP and G1/G2 in human serum and quantified 374 ARGSVI-G2 and G1/G2 levels in the conditioned medium of human OA
explants and drafted the manuscript. BCS and SHM designed and performed the articular cartilage explant cultures, and participated in the measurement of biochemical markers of cartilage turnover. GH, TN and AM collected and provided with the RA human serum samples and controls and additional demographic information regarding the individuals. CP performed knee replacement surgery, made ethical committee applications and collected articular cartilage for experimental settings. PQ took part in analysis of data and drafting the manuscript. PD took part in designing of experiments and analyzing data. MAK took part in drafting the manuscript, made the final version of the manuscript, and designed experimental set-up and analysis of data. All the authors have read and approved the final manuscript. “

Our board member felt the paper's main weakness was the small number of patients included in your study. Therefore, we would appreciate if you acknowledge this as a limitation to your work.

We have more carefully described the limitations of the current study by adding a specific paragraph in the end of the discussion stating: “There are important limitations associated with current study. Firstly the relative small sample size analysed, and importantly the lack of longitudinal analysis. The current data needs to be validated in longitudinal studies, to investigate the time dependent release of these aggrecan molecules and aggrecan profiles. In addition, preferably in clinical trials, there are a need to investigate the clinical potential of the G1/G2 assay to predict structure changes, and whether the assay might be used as a prognostic marker for progression in both the absence and presence of treatment.”

Also we need you to state whether informed consent obtained from patients was written or oral.

We have stated in materials and methods that written informed consent was obtained for the studies
Please also include their source(s) of funding. Please also acknowledge anyone who contributed materials essential for the study.
Authors should obtain permission to acknowledge from all those mentioned in the Acknowledgements.
Please list the source(s) of funding for the study, for each author, and for the manuscript preparation in the acknowledgements section. Authors must describe the role of the funding body, if any, in study design; in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript; and in the decision to submit the manuscript for publication.

We have stated in the acknowledgements that no separate funding was obtained for this study. It was undertaken as part of the authors’ full time employment in their respective institutions.