Author's response to reviews

Title: On the pathogenesis of penile venous leakage: role of the tunica albuginea

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Reviewer: Dr Aldo Franco De Rose.

**METHODS:**

- **The enrollment of the controls is methodologically uncorrect.** The authors selected 17 subjects: 8 normal, 7 with torn TA, 2 with penile carcinoma.
  
  As regard to the controls, an answer to the Reviewer’s comments was added to page 3, last line, and to page 4, 1st paragraph, as well as to page 7, paragraph 2.

- **The cohort of this pts is not homogeneus for their characteristics.**
  
  Controls were homogeneous as regards the fact that they all had normal erection which what was needed from the controls.

- **It’s unclear what the authors mean for normal patients.** The ICP has been recorded only in 8 à€œnormal ptsà€
  
  The ICP was performed not only in 8 controls, but in all of the 17 control subject, as was already mentioned in the 2nd paragraph on page 4.

- **TA biopsies have been performed only in pts with torn TA and penile carcinoma.**
  
  As regards the TA biopsies, the 8 controls with normal erection and normal penis refused to do the TA biopsy. Therefore, we resorted to subjects with normal erection who had traumatic degloved penis and to others who had penile carcinoma involving penile skin only; they had consented to do the biopsies. A comment on this point was added to the 2nd paragraph on page 7.

**DISCUSSION:**

- **This part must be improved linking the outcomes to physiopathological hypothesis.**
  
  The outcomes were linked to physiopathological hypothesis in the 2nd paragraph on page 6.

- **Results should be compared with a more extensive number of papers concerning this subject.**
A number of papers concerning the studied subject was added to the Discussion on page 5, last paragraph and to the 4th paragraph on page 6, as well as to the Reference List.

DISCRETIONARY REVISIONS

- The word erectile dysfunction would be better.
  The term ‘partial erection’ was corrected to read ‘erectile dysfunction’ in the second sentence under Methods.

- An evaluation of nocturnal penile erections could be important to exclude neurological factors. An evaluation of electronic microscope of TA biopsies could clarify collagen fibers alterations that seem to be very similar to those reported in IPP pts responded to the major.
  Nocturnal penile tumescence evaluation was added to the 3rd paragraph on page 3.
  Evaluation of the TA biopsies by electronic microscopy could be planned for another study.

REVIEWER: DR. RICHARD BERGER

1. The authors imply that the abnormality in the tunica is the primary problem causing venous leakage. They need to show that the changes described are not the result of leakage and low intracorporal pressures or support why this could not be the case.
   The answers to this point was added to the 3rd paragraph on page 6.

2. The authors present few figures. These figures are not sufficient for a reviewer to judge the conclusions of the paper. All should be presented for review.
   As seen in the Results’ section, we documented the results of the control subjects it by 2 illustrations and those of the patients by another 2 illustrations. When we tried to add another set of illustrations, we found that they are similar to what is presented and do not add much.
3. The patients and controls are NOT matched for medical condition. How much sicker were patients? Could this effect results?
The answer to this questions was added to the 2nd paragraph of page 7.

4. The location of the biopsies was not stated. Were all from same location in patients and controls? Could this effect results? Does tunica have same histology in all locations?
The answer was added to the 3rd paragraph on page 4. The TA has the same histology except for the inferior aspect.

5. What is authors evidence for subluxation and floppiness? What do they mean?
The evidence for subluxation and flabbiness of the TA was provided by the results of the histological examination of the TA, as had already been mentioned under Results in the 3rd paragraph on page 5.