Author's response to reviews

Title: Skin cancers among Albinos at a University teaching hospital in Northwestern Tanzania: A retrospective review of 64 cases

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Version: 2 Date: 8 May 2012

Author's response to reviews: see over
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Version: 1 Date: 8 May 2012
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Reviewer: Maurice Efana Asuquo

Reviewer’s report:

Page 2

Background

May wish to add "and proffer solutions for improved outcome" as this is included in your conclusion.

*We agree with the reviewer, the statement has been added in the reversed manuscript*

Results

Line 1 - "Their "should read "The".

*Changes has been added in the revised manuscript*

Line 7- add number before 30%.

*Changes has been added in the revised manuscript*

Page 3

Background, para 2, line 1 - Is albinism commoner in regions closer to the equator or skin cancer in albinos commoner in regions closer to the equator?

*We agree with the reviewer, the statement has been rephrased and acknowledged in the reversed manuscript.*

Line 3, para 2 - 20000 should read 20,000.

*Changes has been added in the revised manuscript*

Page 4

Line 5, "Nouse" should read "No use".

*Changes has been added in the revised manuscript*

Line 1 para 2 Squamous should read squamous.

*Changes has been added in the revised manuscript*

Line 2 para 2- In Africa, the.......
**Changes has been added in the revised manuscript**

It does appear that you gave reasons for improved outcome in your conclusion. You may wish to include this in your aims.

*We agree with the reviewer, we have included the reasons for improved outcome in our aims of the study*

Page 5

Under Statistical analysis, line 2, frequent should read frequency.

**Changes has been made in the revised manuscript**

Page 6

Under Clinical presentation - a clinical photograph will add value to this script as the focus of this report is clinical dermatology.

*We agree with the reviewer that under clinical presentation - a clinical photograph will add value to this script as the focus of this report is clinical dermatology; however, it was not possible to get a clinical photograph in this study due to ethical issues*

Page 7

Histopathological type

The contribution of the histopathologist should include a photomicrograph, possibly the melanoma which rare is in albinos.

*We agree with the reviewer on the importance of photomicrograph in this study, however, we were unable to retrieve any photomicrograph especially of malignant melanoma which is rare in albinos.*

Treatment modalities

Page 8

Chemotherapy was not mentioned in the script, were there any reasons?

*Chemotherapy was not mentioned in the script as it was not used in any patients in this study*

Outcome and follow up of patients

Line 4 - mortality rate of 6.3%, state the histological types involved as SCC, BCC
and MM have different aggressive potentials.

*Changes has been made in the revised manuscript as suggested by the reviewer*

Page 9
Para 2, line 7, What lesson can be derived from presentation below 40 years in albinos? Probably early institution of preventive modalities in albinos

*The lesson derived from presentation below 40 years in albinos is clearly stated in the revised manuscript*

Page 10
Line 4/5, what could be the possible risk factor(s) in lesions of the trunk, limbs and genitalia. May be not ultraviolet radiation. Was there evidence of actinic keratoses in the head and neck lesions?

*We could not establish the possible risk factors in lesions of the trunk, limbs and genitalia. There was no evidence of actinic keratoses in the head and neck lesions*

Page 11
Line 18, "were accessible to radiotherapy" should read "had radiotherapy".

*Changes has been made in the revised manuscript as suggested by the reviewer*

Page 12
Line 3, it would be nice to match outcome of healed completely with the histological types.

*Changes has been made in the revised manuscript as suggested by the reviewer*

Para 2, page 12, line 1, local recurrence should be compared with type of skin cancer.

*Changes has been made in the revised manuscript as suggested by the reviewer*
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.
Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests

Reviewer: Myungshin Kim
Reviewer’s report:
This article described the clinical characteristics of skin cancers among Albinos in Northwestern Tanzania and their outcomes. I think this report include valuable data including natural outcome of skin cancer in Albino patients.
Minor comments
1. It is helpful to add the diagnostic criteria of Albinism in your institute.

In agreement with the reviewer’s suggestion, the “diagnostic criteria of Albinism in our institute” is clearly described in the methods section of the revised manuscript

2. If you have data of total Albino patient, you can add the incidence of skin cancer among Albino.

We had no data of total albino patient

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the
statistics.

**Reviewer:** Benoît Arveiler

**Reviewer’s report:**

The manuscript describes the findings from a 10 years retrospective study of skin cancers in 64 albino patients from Tanzania. The study shows that squamous cell carcinoma is the most common histopathological type. Head and neck are the most frequent sites affected. The manuscript shows the need for early involvement in therapeutic actions, and highlights the socio-economical aspects that constrain efficient patients’ caretaking in developing countries. It is very instructive in this respect. Altogether this is a very valuable manuscript. It constitutes one of the largest series of patients analyzed for skin cancers.

**Minor Essential Revisions:**

1) The authors say there are two forms of oculocutaneous albinism (OCA1 and 2, due to TYR and P gene mutations respectively). There are actually four forms, with OCA3 due to TYRP1 mutations and OCA4 due to SLC45A2/MATP mutations. The authors should mention this and cite the appropriate references.

*We thank the reviewer for that addition information, we have mention this and cite the appropriate references in the revised manuscript*

2) When referring to publications about the incidence of albinism in Africa, the authors should also cite Okoro et al (1975), which constitutes their ref. 13, as well as Lee ST, et al. Hum Mol Genet. 1994;3: 2047-51.

*We have included the citation as suggested by the reviewer*


*We have included the above reference as suggested by the reviewer*

**Minor issues not for publication**

1) Journal name is missing in reference 2.

*The journal name has been included in reference 2*
2) Follow up should be follow-up throughout the text.

*Changes have been done as suggested by the reviewer*

3) Last sentence of page 2: ... the remaining patients WERE lost to follow-up.

*Changes have been done as suggested by the reviewer*

4) Page 3: sex linked should be sex-linked.

*Changes have been done as suggested by the reviewer*

5) Page 4: High levels ... all three (not all the three) ... and ARE (not it is) responsible ...

*Changes have been done as suggested by the reviewer*

6) Page 4: resource-limited not resource limited.

*Changes have been done as suggested by the reviewer*

7) Page 5: ... of this facility at our centre. As a result ... (start new sentence here).

*Changes have been done as suggested by the reviewer*

8) Page 5: Information was collected using A preformed questionnaire.

*Changes have been done as suggested by the reviewer*

9) Page 6: During the period under review, A total of 486 ... 

*Changes have been done as suggested by the reviewer*

10) Page 7: the sentence "Distant metastasis ..." should be rebuilt because one does not understand how many cases of each type of metastases there are.

*Changes have been done as suggested by the reviewer*
11) There are several spaces missing throughout the text. Please carefully read
the manuscript.

*Changes have been done as suggested by the reviewer*

12) Page 11: ... wide local excision was the most common surgical procedure
(not procedures).

*Changes have been done as suggested by the reviewer*

13) Last sentence of page 11, finishing on page 12: "Failure to complete
treatment ... this form of treatment" may/should be removed since it essentially
repeats what was already said just before,

*We are grateful to the reviewer for the advice. The changes have been*

*included the in the revised manuscript.*

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely
related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a
statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests.