Author's response to reviews

Title: Histometric data obtained by in vivo confocal laser scanning microscopy in patients with systemic sclerosis

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Comments for the referees: I have not changed everything the way Prof Henrica de Vet requested. The reason is that these requests are due to a misunderstanding of the character of the study. We performed this explorative study in order to investigate a certain disease with a new instrument for the first time. This instrument allows to investigate other aspects of the histopathology than the conventional methods, especially in histometry and changes of vasculature. We did not primarily perform an epidemiologic study in order to choose the best from some known criteria to diagnose systemic sclerosis. Therefore, we do not think, that it is adequate to use statistical methods and manners of presentation that focus on the power of the criteria for diagnosis but we want to stick to our data presentation with the statistical description of differences between the different patient groups investigated. With regard to the diagnostic tools and classification of systemic sclerosis we consider it sufficient to cite the well-accepted reference (LeRoy et al. J Rheumatol 1988;15:202-205) that includes detailed description of diagnostics in systemic sclerosis. With the exception of these problems, we fulfill the recommendations of the reviewers.

Sincerely,
K. Sauermann
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