Author's response to reviews

Title: Periodontal disease-associated micro-organisms in peri-menopausal and post-menopausal women using or not using hormone replacement therapy. A two-year follow-up study.

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Version: 2 Date: 15 March 2010

Author's response to reviews: see over
15.3.2010

The BioMed Central Editorial Team,

Enclosed is our manuscript **MS: 4494665483012383** by Laura Tarkkila, Kirsti Kari, Jussi Furuholm, Aila Tiitinen and Jukka H. Meurman:” Periodontal disease-associated micro-organisms in peri-menopausal and post-menopausal women using or not using hormone replacement therapy. A two-year follow-up study” now revised according to the reviewers comments. Our detailed answers to the referee comments raised are in this letter. Would you so kind and let me know if the revised manuscript might be accepted for publication. The work is original and is not under consideration anywhere else.

Yours sincerely,

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Authors answers to the questions raised by the reviewers

MS: 4494665483012383
Periodontal disease-associated micro-organisms in peri-menopausal and post-menopausal women using or not using hormone replacement therapy. A two-year follow-up study. Laura Tarkkila, Kirsti Kari, Jussi Furuholm, Aila Tiitinen and Jukka H Meurman

First, we thank the reviewers for the constructive criticisms. Below our point-to-point comments.

Reviewer's report
Title: Periodontal disease-associated micro-organisms in peri-menopausal and post-menopausal women using or not using hormone replacement therapy. A two-year follow-up study.

Version: 1 Date: 26 February 2010

REFEREE 1

Reviewer's report:
1. Question is well defined
2. Methods are appropriate and well described
3. Data sound
4. Relevant standards for reporting
5. Data supports conclusion
6. Limitations of the study are stated, but important references in Periodontics are not noted. (Background section, there IS data on the prevalence of microbiota both sub and supra gingivally, these references are not noted.) The discussion section should also reflect on what is known in periodontics, not mentioned so far in the Background section.

RESPONSE: It is true that literature is voluminous regarding supra- and subgingival microbiota in periodontal disease. However, data is sparse as regards peri-, menopausal and post-menopausal women which was, in fact, one reason why the present study was conducted. We have now added six new references on this particular topic with some discussion.

7. Need for additional references

RESPONSE: Please see above.
8. Appropriate abstract and title

Minor revisions are needed (see points 6-7 above).

Declaration of competing interests:
I have no reimbursements, fees, funding or salary related to publication of this paper; I hold no stocks or investments related to this project, I have no other interests to disclose.
REFEREE 2
Reviewer's report
Title: Periodontal disease-associated micro-organisms in peri-menopausal and post-menopausal women using or not using hormone replacement therapy. A two-year follow-up study.
Version: 1 Date: 2 March 2010
Reviewer's report:
Major compulsory revision:
In the conclusion you concluded that the microbiota of interest decreased in HRT users and not in non HRT users. At the same time you concluded that the periodontal conditions did not change differently between groups. Does this suggests that the microbiological findings/bacteria presence is irrelevant to periodontitis in relation to HRT or no HRT use.
RESPONSE: We have now revised the conclusion to “hit” more clearly the point.

Please revisit statistical methods used. The changes in parameter values are what you should consider taking in account changes in smoking habits, other medications, and disease status i.e. CVD.
RESPONSE: The suggested parameters were included in the statistical analyses. However, since there were practically no difference in the background factors during the 2-year follow-up the changes in these parameters did not emerge significant.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
RESPONSE: The English has been revised.
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