Author's response to reviews

Title: Is Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) stage an independent risk factor for altering the periodontal status of HIV-positive patients? A South African Study.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Ms Eloisa Nolasco,

I trust that you have received the email I sent on Friday asking for an extension of a few days due to the passing of my sister. Attached is the revised manuscript which I hope is now ready for publication. I have made the changes according to the request of the reviewers and thank them for their valid comments. Two of the reviewers’ reports found the manuscript acceptable for publication with a few minor corrections requested while the third reviewer was satisfied.

Regarding the changes requested by the reviewers.

1. **The chapter was not included in the reference 14 of the bibliography.**
   
   This has now been included along with the page numbers.

2. **Suggesting the changing of “overestimating them in the elderly” (page 15 in the Discussion) to “underestimating them in the elderly”**
   
   We agree that this is an error and I have changed it.

3. **Table 4. Recommendation that the Mann-Whitney U test be used rather than the Wilcoxon signed rank test**
   
   I consulted with the statistician who explained that since each of the clinical measurements was compared with the presence or absence of a particular variable, the Wilcoxon test was indeed acceptable and need not be changed. Both the other reviewers were satisfied with the statistics.

4. **As identified previously, there is a description of groups A, B and C in the material and methods of the Abstract but it is still incorrectly placed in the Results section in the body of the paper.**
   
   This has now been corrected. See page 7 paragraph 1.

5. **On page 12, the sentence “These findings are similar to those of Vastadis et al [26] and others [33,36] who found periodontal disease to be less prevalent in subjects with CD4+ counts <200 cells/mm³ than in those with CD4+ counts >500 cells/mm³[35].” is clumsy. I would suggest that you use the sentence from the first draft.**
   
   Re-worded. See line 14, page 17.

6. **On page 12, the age range of the study population is incorrectly identified as (17-55 years) but your data in Table 2 shows 20-55 years.**
7. In the conclusion you should acknowledge the impact of ART on the susceptibility of periodontal disease.

See last paragraph on page 20.

8. Changes to abstract

“ART and smoking” added to keywords

9. Results: paragraph 2

“Group” added to A, B, C for clarification in order to explain Table 1.

10. Page 19. “Lack of interest…. better oral hygiene” The reviewer felt that we should include other factors as well.

Page 19, first paragraph: We inserted “This may be due to a host of factors including general lack of interest ….for maintaining better oral hygiene, lack of access to medical and dental care, or other factors beyond their control.”

We trust that this now meets with the approval of the reviewers and thank you for considering our manuscript for publication in your journal.

Yours sincerely,

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