Author's response to reviews

Title: Dose patterns in commercially insured subjects chronically exposed to opioids: a large cohort study in the United States

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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Natalie Pafitis, MSc
The BioMed Central Editorial Team

Dear Miss Pafitis,

It is with great pleasure than we resubmit the manuscript: 1516687566303675 Dose patterns in commercially insured subjects chronically exposed to opioids: a large cohort study in the United States.

You will find below our responses to the reviewer’s comments. I hope that the Editorial Team and Editors find them satisfactory.

Sincerely,

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Reviewer’s comment

1. While the authors have been somewhat responsive to earlier comments, the responses are not sufficient. After responding to earlier comments, they DID find an important early increase in dose in the non-cancer patients. Thus, the conclusion in the text and abstract that the only important dose increases occur after 2 years and primarily in cancer patients is not true. This must be restated completely in both the text and abstract, and placed in more direct context with the VonKorff study. There should be added discussion and reference to how "high dose" has been defined here, and whether that definition is still reasonable in light of the VonKorff study findings.

Response:
We have deleted from the abstract and manuscript that the increase in dose was primarily in cancer patients. We have expanded the discussion of the findings of the Von Korff study. We still make reference to doses of 180 and 300 mg as these doses are considered of interest as well. The conclusion in both the abstract and manuscript was changed to address the referee’s request.

2. Finally, the authors continue to focus on median doses in parts of the text, and this is just not that relevant to the potential for important adverse events.

Response:
In the abstract we now report, in addition to the median, the mean, the 25th, 75th and 95th percentiles. In the text of the manuscript, we deleted from the Methods section the sentence that made reference to using the median as the preferred measure. In the text of the manuscript we already consistently made reference to mean, the 25th, 75th and 95th percentiles so no additional changes were made.