Author's response to reviews

Title: Effects of tamoxifen on vaginal blood flow and epithelial morphology in the rat

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Dr. Le,

We thank the additional reviewers for their evaluation of our revised manuscript entitled “Effects of tamoxifen on vaginal blood flow and epithelial morphology in the rat” (MS #1145527410995937). We are submitting a second revision of our provisionally accepted manuscript for publication in BMC Women’s Health. While we have revised the manuscript in accordance with the recommendations of the referees, some of the suggested discretionary changes were deemed to be unnecessary. All changes in the text of the manuscript have been highlighted. A point-by-point response to the issues raised by each reviewer is provided below. We look forward to your final decision regarding this study.

Sincerely,

Noel N. Kim
Miljan Stankovic
Abdullah Armagan
Tulay T. Cushman
Irwin Goldstein
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Response to Reviewer Tarcan:

Minor Essential Revisions

1) “...it is not possible to differ the testosterone and estrogen-deprived states from each other. For this reason, I strongly encourage the authors to mention this issue as a weak part of their study in the discussion...”

We have added a new paragraph in the discussion (page 16) to briefly address the limitation of our study with regard to androgens and tamoxifen action. We have also introduced additional references within this paragraph.

2) The term “vaginal physiological function” in the abstract can be replaced by a more correct expression such as “vaginal physiology” or “vaginal function”.

We have changed the term in the abstract, as recommended by the reviewer.

Response to Reviewer Hascalik:

Discretionary Revisions

1) Abstract background, material and method sections, and discussion should be shortened/slashed. (paraphrased from reviewers comments)
We deemed these suggested changes to be unnecessary, since this is an on-line journal with no space or page limitations. Further, we believe that this manuscript is reasonably succinct and has only been expanded upon the recommendations of the other reviewers.

2) Abstract, Results: How the mean vaginal weight was determined?

The weighing of tissue is clearly described in the methods section. However, we believe that it is not necessary to describe such a simple procedure in the abstract itself.

3) Abstract, Results: “Tamoxifen treatment caused a significant decrease in mean uterine weights, whereas mean vaginal weights were similar in control and tamoxifen-infused rats.”

This sentence is not clear. It should be re-arranged.

We have rephrased this sentence, as suggested by the reviewer.

4) Abstract, Conclusion: The sentence beginning with “Further research is required to better understand the clinical symptoms associated with tamoxifen treatment and their effects on sexual function in women” should be removed.

We have deleted this sentence, as suggested by the reviewer.

5) Introduction: This sentence starting with “In a study designed to specifically assess the effects of tamoxifen on sexual function in women, 22 of 41 sexually active subjects...” should be carried into the Discussion.

The sentences cited by the reviewer are merely an elaboration upon the preceding sentence and intended to provide some detail for a general readership regarding the potential prevalence of sexual dysfunction in women treated with tamoxifen. It is not meant to discuss any of our data. Thus, we believe that this portion of text is better suited for the introduction, rather than the discussion.

6) If the authors have sufficient vaginal tissue they can optionally measure the tissue NO levels.

Additional vaginal tissue is not available for such analyses. However, future studies may incorporate these measurements.

7) Results, Page 12, line 3,4: In vivo studies in anesthetized rats demonstrated frequency-dependent increase in........Instead of “In vivo”, Present study....should be written.

Since the text in the results section refers exclusively to our own “present” study and not to other studies, we feel that the use of “present study” would be redundant. We used “In vivo” to distinguish these studies from the biochemical and histological studies.