Author's response to reviews

Title: Changes in cytokine production in healthy subjects practicing Guolin Qigong: A pilot study

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Response to Reviewer's comments:

Reviewer: Dr Kenneth Sancier

1. "in vivo or in vitro" has been omitted (p3 para 1)
2. Enhancement of cell growth by emitted qi has been mentioned (p3 para 1)
3. One of the papers by Higuchi et al has been cited (p4 para 1, ref [15])
4. The speculative sentence has been removed (p4 para 2)
5. The following sentence has been added to the Introduction: "Cell-mediated responses are important in protection against cancers, while overproduction of anti-inflammatory cytokines is potentially suppressive for anti-cancer immunity." (p4 para 2)
6. Correction made
7. Recommended changes to figures made

Reviewer: Dr Ario Conti

No revisions required

Reviewer: Dr K W Kelley

1. The need to study the individual components of Qigong has been mentioned in the Conclusions (p12 para 1)
2. The first paragraph of the Discussion has been rewritten "to temper some of the broad, sweeping interpretations that were presented in the Discussion" (p8 para 3)
3. It is already stated that PHA, Con A and anti-CD3 are T-cell stimuli and LPS and SAC stimulate monocytes (p5 para 2). Data on IFN 3; and IL4 from unstimulated cultures was not presented because invariably there were no measurable cytokine-secreting cells, as stated on p7 para 2
4. The following sentence has been added to the Introduction: "Cell-mediated responses are important in protection against cancers, while overproduction of anti-inflammatory cytokines is potentially suppressive for anti-cancer immunity." (p4 para 2)
5. (a) Age of subjects has been added to Abstract (p2 para 2)
(b) The following sentence has been added "no ELISPOTs develop when unmatched pairs of anti-cytokine antibodies are used for capture and detection" (p9 para 3)
(c) References 4, 6, 9, 10, 11 and 15 have been removed. However an unreviewed compilation of abstracts and a website have been cited in the text (p3 para 3 and p4 para 1)
(d) Legends to figures have been expanded
(e) Graph ordinates have been redone
Reviewer: Dr Yong Ming Li

1. The following has been added to Background: "This form of Qigong, which is characterized by a slow walking exercise accompanied by arm movements coordinated with slight twisting movements of the waist, is said to be particularly helpful for cancer patients. There is no external force applied to Guolin Qigong practitioners." (p3 para 2)

2. The following has been added to the Abstract: ".... although not necessarily representative of a truly randomized healthy population and not including a separate control group...." (p2 para 4). The following has been added to Conclusions "....... from a small, non-randomized, uncontrolled study......." (p12 para 1)