Author's response to reviews

Title: Comparing oil based ointment versus standard practice for the treatment of moderate burns in Greece: a trial based cost effectiveness evaluation

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Reviewer

Thank you so much for your kind comments and encouraging suggestions. I would like to inform you that I am just about through with all revisions and you will receive the attached text along with them.

1. “Please report some more data on the 5 patients with an allergic reaction in result section: how severe, was additional treatment necessary?” I have added the necessary details for the patients presenting allergy in the result section.

2. “I'm not sure of 'dominant' is a correct way to describe the 'better' treatment”. In health economics the term dominant or dominating is used in the case where a program presents higher effectiveness and lower cost than the comparators (Drummond MF, O’Brien B, Stoddart GL et al.: Methods for the Economic Evaluation of Healthcare Programs (3rd Edition): Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK 2002). Such is the case of MEBO therapy in the superficial partial thickness burns group.

3. “In methods - study populations: change text to 1. "absence of cancer and diabetes" instead of "some systematic diseases" which is to vague and suggest that inclusion criteria are not defined before the study period…..” I have made the suggested changes in the methodology according to your suggestions.

4. “Typing error in ‘incremental cost effectiveness’ point 2.”. Thank you very much for your suggestion. It has been corrected but the confidence interval remains large : (-120.4; 181.8) and not (-12.04 ;18.18) . This is due to the fact that generally non parametric bootstrap produces asymmetric and larger confidence intervals than parametric approximations (Barber J and Simon G Thompson S. Statist. Med. 2000; 19:3219-3236), especially in case of skewed data and/or sample sizes <100 (for example, see Doran C. Buprenorhine, Buprenorphine/Naloxone and methadone maintenance: a cost – effectiveness analysis. Expert Review of Pharmacoeconomics Outcomes Research 5(5), 583 – 591 (2005): ICER:.-201 CI:(-2069 to 1809)) .

5. “In the ‘cost results’, cost of analgetics, 'significantly higher' seems a huge overstatement for a difference of €0.04 (although the p is very small).” The detailed prices were 0.080 and 0.125 that finally with the rounding of prices correspondingly
are 0.08 and 0.13. So, the final difference is 0.05 and not 0.04 (that is corrected). Despite the apparently small difference the p value is 0.002 so we reject the null hypothesis (I have rerun the analysis to verify that). The phrase is restructured taking into account your suggestions.

6. “Could you reflect in the discussion on all four hypotheses mentioned in your ‘aims of the trial’?”

I have reflected in the discussion on all four hypotheses according to your suggestions.