Author's response to reviews

Title: Alternative vs. conventional treatment given on-demand for gastroesophageal reflux disease: a randomised controlled trial

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Author's response to reviews:

Senior Editor Iratxe Puebla
BMC Complementary and Alternative Medicine

Dear Sir,


Thanks for your kind evaluation of the paper and valuable comments. I have the following comments given point-by-point:

Comments to your mail:

• Consent: Type of consent given by the patients is added to the “Method” section.

• Competing interests: It has been added that Ferrosan AS Norway/Denmark partially funded the study and provided one of the compounds employed in the trial. This means that the funding by Ferrosan is mentioned twice, both as funding source and competing interests. Is that what is correct?

Comments to reviewer Glyn Jamieson

1. Whether “Aflurax” is an alternative or complementary (CAM) medicine is a semantic question. I prefer to call it CAM since it is a natural product and not a conventional chemical product. And it seems clear that the raft has an effect in addition to the antacid effect. The study by Waterhouse et al (Ref 12) shows a reduction in the total number of reflux episodes (showed with radiolabelled food) and not only a reduction in acid reflux. One short sentence has been added to the discussion to clarify these raft-forming properties.

2. Mild and moderate have been defined in the revised manuscript.

3. I think the study indicates that “the pectin-based raft-forming agent might be an
alternative…”, but accept that it should be left out from the conclusion. It is therefore deleted from the conclusion in the revised manuscript, but is still part of the discussion.

Comments to reviewer Ken Haruma
1. Mild/moderate reflux has been defined in the revised manuscript (see above).
2. Improvements of lifestyle were performed according to each doctor’s preferences and were not recorded in the trial. It is unlikely that any lifestyle interventions differ between the treatment groups. This has been mentioned in the revised manuscript.
3. Tests for H. pylori were not performed as part of the study. It is unlikely that there are any differences between the treatment groups. This has been mentioned in the revised manuscript.
4. What the doctors recommended after the trial is unknown. We know what the patients preferred, and the doctors probably prescribed the drug preferred by the patient.
5. Neither healing rate nor long term complications were evaluated in this study. We therefore have no information about long term complications.

I kindly ask you to evaluate the revised manuscript for publication in BMC Complementary and Alternative Medicine, and thank you in advance.

Yours sincerely

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