Author's response to reviews

Title: A straightforward approach to designing a scoring system for predicting outcome of critical patients

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As requested, we added the following paragraph at the beginning of the subsection “Study population and feature selection” (page 7):

The data set for developing the locally customized scoring system was retrieved from the computerized database of the Department of Surgery and Bioengineering of Siena University. Due to the retrospective nature of the study, the need for informed consent was waived. The authors did not have direct access to this institutional database. Aggregated patients’ data were provided anonymously. The consent to use the anonymous data was given: the use of aggregate anonymous patient data does not implicate the privacy concerns that apply to patient-identifiable information. The study was undertaken after the approval of the Ethics Committee (Comitato etico locale e comitato etico per la sperimentazione clinica dei medicinali) of Siena University Hospital and was conducted in compliance with Helsinki declaration.