Author's response to reviews

Title: Four minutes for a patient, twenty seconds for a relative - an observational study at an university hospital

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear Editors,

please find attached the electronic version of the manuscript `Four minutes for a patient, twenty seconds for a relative – an observational study at an university hospital` which my co-authors and myself would like to submit for publication in BMC Health Services Research.

Increasing administrative requirements for health care delivery and increasing possibilities in medical examination techniques claim physicians’ energy and encroach on time spent with patients. Quality time between physician and patient is an increasingly valuable resource. In this context our study aimed to investigate how much time physicians on a hospital ward actually spend on the communication with patients and their relatives. In addition, we explored how much time physicians spent on other tasks like medical treatment, discussions with colleagues, or administrative requirements.

The presented study is one of the first to look specifically at physicians on hospital wards and to explore aspects of time in the communication with patients and relatives by systematic extrinsic measurements. The content of the manuscript is original and it has not been published or accepted for publication, either in whole or in parts, in any form. No part of the manuscript is currently under consideration for publication elsewhere. We sincerely hope that our manuscript will find your interest. Please let us know if any further information is required.

With kind regards, sincerely yours

Gerhild Becker, M.D.