Author's response to reviews

Title: Predictors of mortality among elderly dependent home care patients

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Version: 5 Date: 6 February 2013

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Reviewer: Claudio Bilotta
Reviewer's report:

We truly appreciate the reviewers comments. They have improved the paper considerably and clarified many issues in the previous version of the manuscript.

Major compulsory revisions
1. I look forward to seeing in Table 6 (or in a supplementary Table as well) all the variables originally included in the multivariate analysis, i.e. including those found to be not significantly related to death.

We have now included a supplementary table 7 with those results.

2. I look forward to seeing methods and results (including data in a specific Table or supplementary Table) concerning the multivariate analysis performed on the sub-group of those 821 patients having a care giver – analysis the Authors stated having performed. If the Zarit test did not appear as a significant variable after correction for the other covariates, the relevance of caregiver burden in the Discussion should be changed accordingly.

As atated above, we have included an additional table 7 and, just as the reviewer expected, the Zarit test and self-perceived health (SF-12) turned out to be significant variables in this subgroup of patients. We must have misunderstood the reviewer’s comment in his previous review, we apologise and we appreciate his insistance. We have accordingly modified methods, results and discussion sections.

3. In the Conclusion the statement that ‘A proactive integrated social and health
service programme for community dwelling EDPLH patients aiming at preventing pressure ulcers and unnecessary hospital admissions, might be more effective than current demand-driven home care programmes for these patients.’ has to be deleted since it is absolutely not supported by the nature and findings of the study, as previously explained in my first and second review for this manuscript. We have deleted it.