Author's response to reviews

Title: Dynamics of Vitamin D in Patients with Mild or Inactive Inflammatory Bowel Disease and Their Families

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear Dr Nagaraj Nagathihalli Oct 27/2013

Editor: Nutrition Journal

Once again we thank you for your consideration of our previous revision of MS: 1777784220100378 “Dynamics of Vitamin D in Patients with Mild or Inactive Inflammatory Bowel Disease and Their Families” We now offer point by point responses to remaining questions. Version 2 changes are highlighted in red as well we kept the previous yellow highlights.

Reviewer 1

1) '25(OH) vitamin D concentrations' is the correct terminology and should be used in place of 'vitamin D serum levels' or 'serum vitamin D levels'. Please check the statistical analysis and results sections and tables for proper usage.

Response:

The 25(OH) vitamin D has been used throughout and these changes are marked in red highlight.
2) Table 3 -- The row headings 'Total Intake with Supplemental Vit D' and 'Total Intake without Supplemental Vit D' are unclear -- These appear to be the total vitamin D intakes of the subset of those either taking or not-taking supplements. However, that was not initially obvious - and would suggest more clearly defining the category.

Response: The Table has been corrected marked in Red.

3) Table 4 -- All values in the table appear to be serum 25(OH) vitamin D. Yet, the row headings indicate 'Vit D intake with supplement' and 'Vitamin D intake without supplement' - which adds confusing. Suggest using 'Non-supplement users' and 'Supplement users'. Also, there is a row heading 'Vitamin 25(OH)D' seems to be misplaced or unnecessary.

Response:

The changes have been made and marked in red.

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being Published

Response:

Syntax and spelling have been rechecked and changes have been marked in red.

We hope these changes are adequate.

Reviewer 2

1. The authors have revised the title of their manuscript - however, elsewhere the term stable IBD persists in many parts of the manuscript. Further, the Methods makes a vague comment that subjects were "generally" in remission. I would
suggest that the words "with mild or inactive" is taken from the title. Also careful and consistent wording will be important through the manuscript. The addition of a definition for stable IBD is helpful

Response

We have changed patients generally in remission to patients with mild to inactive IBD.

These descriptors for the included patients have now been used throughout and are marked with red. The concept of stable [patients has been defined “(no change in medications for at least 3 months) and had mild or inactive disease”.

2. Unfortunately, there are numerous errors of English wording or grammar in the New (yellow-highlighted) text. These need attention. As do errors in the existing text.

Response

A repeat spell check and review have been done the abstract and background have been rewritten.

3. In regards the use of family members: were all members of each family recruited? did the subjects chose which family members were included? Bias can be introduced at these and other levels in regards control selection.

Response

We recognize the value of evaluating all family members. However because of time availability of volunteers only a single member was studied and these participants were self chosen based on availability. These descriptors have now been included in the text on pg 6 for IBD families as well as controls.

4. Although numbers were small, did disease activity affect vit D status in the subjects?

Response
There were 7 Crohn’s patients with HBI greater than 4, Six had 25(OH) vitamin D values available. A correlation of r = -0.024, a modest inverse relationship. This is now pointed out on pg 11, in the patient’s characteristic section. This mini calculation is also mentioned in Discussion raising the possibility that higher HBI scores ie. More active disease is associated with lower vitamin D levels (pg 16).

5. The inclusion of CRP is a good addition.

Response

We now include a statement in the patient’s demographic section that in 10 IBD patients (either CD or UC) CRP levels did not correlate well with 25(OH) vitamin D levels (pg 11).

6. "precipitation" of IBD (Abstract) may not be the best term.

Response

The term has now been changed in the Abstract Background and Conclusions.

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Response

The spell check and syntax have been redone.

The Abstract has been expanded in view of the 350 word limit and we think it is more complete this way.

The references were rechecked and the NJ guidelines have been used

We hope these changes are adequate.

Thank you again

Andrew Szilagyi