Author's response to reviews

Title: The Effects of apoptosis vulnerability markers on the myocardium in depression after myocardial infarction

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Sabina Alam  
Editor-in-Chief of Journal of BMC Medicine

Dear Sabina

Many thanks for your assistance. The following responses to reviewer 3's comments have now been addressed.

**Answer questions:**

**Reviewer:**

Dr Lucia Carboni comments:

1. **Experimental design**

   The model of post-MI depression in which decreased movement and anhedonic-like state occurred in 7 out of 20 myocardial infarction rats in our experiment. Which were the cut-off levels that were adopted to define “decreased movement” and “anhedonic-like states”?

   These should be reported in the Methods. (e.g. in Mallei et al., Neuropharmacology. 2011;60:1243-53 the authors split the experimental animals into LH and NLH: in section 2.2.1 the criteria for selection were reported).

   **We have added the Reference in the Methods, pg6, line 12, and Reference (25) pg 23, highlighted in red.**

2. **Choice and description of the methods**

   The issue that: “Using RT PCR as a quantitative method for measuring the level of gene expression is not adequate, since quantitative real time RT PCR methods are now available. End-point RT PCR as adopted in this study is not sufficiently quantitative to allow accurate comparisons of expression levels” was not addressed. Addressing this issue would require additional experiments (on the same samples) using real-time RT PCR. My advice is to perform the experiments
Michael Berk  cont’d…

Real time RT PCR methods and results have been added to the Abstract (Methods), pg2, line8-9, Methods, pg10, line 5, 8, 13-23, and Results pg 12 and Table 3, highlighted in red.

3. Primer series of Bax, Bcl-2,β-actin and caspase-3 have been changed in Table2 for real time RT-PCR.

4. We have deleted Figure3 because we are using real time RT-PCR instead of RT-PCR, so we changed table3 and kept table 4 (The expression of bax and bcl-2 protein).

Yours sincerely

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