Author's response to reviews

**Title:** Unresponsive wakefulness syndrome: a new name for the vegetative state or apallic syndrome?

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**Author's response to reviews:** see over
Dear Editor,

We hereby submit for publication the consensus paper of the European Task Force on Disorders of Consciousness, proposing a new name (“Unresponsive Wakefulness Syndrome” or UWS) for an over 35-year old syndrome with an unintended albeit persistent negative connotation - the vegetative state and discuss the need for controlled studies and evidence based decision making. In our view, this paper reflects a growing feeling in the European neurological, neurosurgical and rehabilitation communities. Given a series of recent behavioral, electrophysiological and neuroimaging studies on disorders of consciousness following coma we believe this opinion paper is very timely. Despite the existing ethical and philosophical differences in points of view within Europe and amidst the co-authors and Task Force, this consensus paper aims to build evidence-based standards of care and science, free of political or religious considerations. It is co-signed by internationally renowned European experts from the different specialties involved in disorders of consciousness: neurology, neurosurgery, rehabilitation and chronic nursing care and by Pr Celesia, member of the prestigious 1994 US Multi-Society Task Force on the medical aspects of the persistent vegetative (New England Journal of Medicine, 330, 1994). Thanks for considering this debate paper for publication in a wide-audience free-access journal such as BMC Medicine.

We take the liberty to propose as Reviewers:

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Thanks for your time and effort in considering this MS.

Steven Laureys MD PhD

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Chairman of the European Neurological Society Subcommittee on Coma and disorders of consciousness
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