Author’s response to reviews

**Title:** Rationale and study design of PROVHILO - a worldwide multicenter randomized controlled trial on protective ventilation during general anesthesia for open abdominal surgery

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

Please find enclosed our manuscript entitled ‘Rationale and Study Design of PROVHILO – a Worldwide Multicenter Randomized Controlled Trial on Protective Ventilation During General Anesthesia for Abdominal Surgery’ that we would like to submit for publication in Trials Journal.

The manuscript encompasses the study protocol of PROVHILO (PROtective Ventilation using HIgh versus LOw positive end–expiratory pressure), the first worldwide randomized controlled trial on intra-operative ventilation strategy, recruiting up to 900 patients.

PROVHILO aims at comparing lung–protective mechanical ventilation with the use of higher levels of PEEP and intra–operative recruitment maneuvers to conventional mechanical ventilation with lower levels of PEEP without recruitment maneuvers in patients undergoing open abdominal surgery. We hypothesize that the lung–protective mechanical ventilation strategy protects against post–operative pulmonary and extra–pulmonary complications, and shortens length of hospital stay.

If this study is successful, it will change daily clinical practice in anesthesiology. Especially considering the large number of open abdominal surgery performed around the world, this trial will have great impact on post–operative clinical course, length of hospital stay, and overall costs.

The trial has been designed according to the ICH guidelines of Good Clinical Practice in concordance with the CONSORT Guidelines, in order to obtain high methodological quality.

Sincerely,

on behalf of all co-authors,

Sabrine N.T. Hemmes