Author’s response to reviews

Title: Thoracic epidural analgesia versus rectus sheath catheters for open midline incisions in major abdominal surgery within an Enhanced Recovery Program (TERSC): study protocol for a randomised controlled trial

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
Dear Trials Editorial Team,

Re. Manuscript ID 1029317611015516 - Thoracic epidural analgesia versus rectus sheath catheters for open midline incisions in major abdominal surgery within an Enhanced Recovery Program (TERSC): study protocol for a randomised controlled trial

Thank-you for your email dated 22/08/2014. The Editorial requests have been addressed in a revised manuscript as follow:

1. A list of abbreviations used and their meanings has been inserted after the Trial Status section;
2. An additional file title and legend section (‘Figure legends and supplementary material’) has been inserted after the reference list.

To respond to the concern raised at peer review over sample size: the sample size for TERSC was calculated by two study statisticians and agreed by two other independent statisticians from the Steering Committee and Data Management and Ethics Committee respectively. Additionally, the study passed peer review and obtained an NIHR grant on the basis of the existing power calculation and has been underway since February 2014 with the agreed powering. All similar studies of which we are aware have been conducted with a lower planned recruitment. Consequently, although we have considered the comments carefully, no changes to the protocol or sample size have been made at this stage.

Once again, many thanks. We await your final editorial decision.

Sincerely,

Dr KM Wilkinson,

On behalf of Dr A Krige, Chief Investigator, TERSC.