Author's response to reviews

Title: Whither the etiopathogenesis (and scoliogeny) of adolescent idiopathic scoliosis? Incorporating presentations on scoliogeny at the 2012 IRSSD and SRS Meetings

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Sir

Re: Whither the etiopathogenesis (and scoliogeny) of adolescent idiopathic scoliosis? Incorporating presentations on scoliogeny at the 2012 IRSSD and SRS Meetings. Richard G Burwell, Peter H Dangerfield, Alan Moulton, Theodoros Grivas and Jack C Cheng

We write to respond to the Comments of the two Reviewers of our paper.

Reviewer 1

Thank you for your comments.

Comment: You think it would be of paramount importance to grade the evidence on etiopathogenesis of AIS- presumably for each quoted paper/abstract, according to the strength of evidence. You state this is usually done in all systematic reviews.

Response: Our paper is not a systematic review of the evidence on AIS scoliogeny. But it does use as template an invited Whither paper on the etiopathogenesis of AIS from the 2012 IRSSD Meeting with the text unaltered.

The aim of our new Whither paper is simply to collate papers/abstracts from the 2012 IRSSSD and SRS Meetings that we consider may have a relation to the etiopathogenesis of AIS, to facilitate the searches of interested readers.

An attempt to provide a level of evidence for each selected paper/abstract is not possible. Even if it were, it would be beyond the scope of this paper.

The readers are left to assess the value of those contributions that interest them.

To cover these points we replace the initial Review paragraph with a new paragraph (see below).

Reviewer 2

Thank you for your comments.

Comment 1: You say it would be helpful provide articles relating to initiating (or inducing) and progressive factors.
Response: These aspects were summarized in our invited Whither paper by reference to Burwell (2003) and Cheung et al (2008). These references are carried over into this paper.

Comment 2: In the literature it is difficult to interpret findings as primary or secondary - as in vertebral sagittal plane deformity.

Response: We agree. Our paper does not interpret the findings from the selected 2012 papers/abstracts.

Comment 3: In the literature conflicting findings a for AIS subjects - as for stature

Response: We agree. Again, our paper does not interpret the findings from each selected 2012 paper/abstract.

Comment 4: It would be helpful to arrange the article findings in:

- Likely to play a role in induction of scoliosis,
- Likely to play a role in progression of scoliosis,
- Likely to be the consequence of having scoliosis.

Response: To do this would exceed our aim – to provide a record in a structured way of new research findings – within the scaffolding of the invited Whither paper published in the IOS Book of the 2012 IRSSD Meeting. The aim is not to interpret these papers/abstracts – that is left to the reader.

To cover these points raised by Reviewers 1 & 2 we replace the initial Review paragraph with a new paragraph as follows:

Review

This paper aims to integrate into current thinking about AIS causation, etiopathogenetic information presented at two Meetings during 2012 namely, the International Research Society of Spinal Deformities (IRSSD) and the Scoliosis Research Society (SRS). This is done by arranging extracts as paragraphs (with italicised headings) into the structure of an invited review article at that IRSSD Meeting beginning with the Abstract [1]. These placements reveal where progress is being made. Moreover, they suggest fields where the focus is becoming clearer, needs enlarging, or is neglected. There is a lack of such collated updated preliminary etiopathogenetic researches in the literature. Neither
is an attempt made here to provide level of evidence for the selected presentations -
most of which are not full papers, nor are the findings interpreted with respect to
theories of curve initiation, progression, or the consequence of having AIS, other than
that provided by their authors. Readers are invited to apportion significance to those
researches that interest them.

Sincerely

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