Author's response to reviews

Title: Interrater and intrarater reliability of Photoplethysmography for measuring toe blood pressure and toe-brachial index in people with Diabetes Mellitus

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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Prof Hylton Menz  
Editor-in-Chief  
Journal of Foot and Ankle Research

Dear Prof Menz,

Ms. Ref. No.: 7225919845550872

Title: Interrater and intrarater reliability of Photoplethysmography for measuring toe blood pressure and toe-brachial index in people with Diabetes Mellitus

We thank the editor and reviewers for their thoughtful comments concerning our manuscript and for considering our study for publication in Journal of Foot and Ankle Research. We have carefully addressed the issues raised by the editorial team and reviewers and would like to take the opportunity to resubmit our revised manuscript.

We have provided our revised manuscript with the changes highlighted. In addition, we have provided a separate document listing the editorial and reviewer comments verbatim and our replies, point by point (with page numbers of any changes made).

As a result, we believe this revised manuscript is significantly improved in clarity and will be informative to the readership of Journal of Foot and Ankle Research.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Scanlon and Associate Professor Joshua Burns, Ph.D.  
on behalf of the co-authors Kris Park, David Mapletoft, Lindy Begg
Editors' comments

The authors need to consult the instructions for authors and format the manuscript correctly. The referencing style is incorrect and the reference list has several errors. Also, changes to the title must be made to the online submission system (in addition to the manuscript file). These changes were requested in the previous editorial comments. The manuscript will not be considered for publication unless these changes are made.

Authors’ response: Apologies for this oversight. We have reformatted in accordance with JFAR instructions and corrected the references. We have changed the title in the online submission system (in addition to the manuscript file) as requested.

Reviewers’ comments:

Reviewer: Keith Rome
Reviewer’s report: I am satisfied with the authors comments.

Reviewer: Magnus Löndahl
Reviewer’s report: The authors’ answers to mine and my reviewer colleagues comments are satisfactory and the manuscript is improved after revision. This is an important paper as arterial toe blood pressure measurement is a widely used diagnostic tool in the field of the diabetic foot. I have only three minor remarks left:

1. HbA1c is given twice in table 1.
   Authors’ response: Amended.

2. Are the data in table 1 normally distributed? Otherwise, I suggest that data are given as median instead of mean values.
   Authors’ response: Table 1 updated with mean/medians to reflect distribution of data and associated analysis described on page 7.

3. Three “comments-remarks” (C1, C2 and C3) ought to be removed.
   Authors’ response: Removed.

Reviewer: Byron Perrin
Reviewer’s report: Most of the points raised at the initial review have been addressed in some way. However, there still seems to me a lack of concluding statements. This may be addressed by having a short, focused conclusion paragraph, rather than meekly ending the whole article on limitations and need for more research.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. A concluding paragraph is required.
   Authors’ response: Conclusion added to page 11.
2. Incomplete or incorrectly formatted references (Overall format style incorrect, see also 28- no pages, some title abbreviated, some not) and several typos need editing (the abstract could do with a refinement).

Authors’ response: We have reformatted in accordance with JFAR instructions and corrected the references.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Methods: What is the point of the "medical history form"?

Authors’ response: Agree that it is unnecessary to report. Removed.

2. Methods, paragraph 2. Is there any prior evidence of the SmartDop 30EX being used in a study?

Authors’ response: Yes, we have provided these references on page 6.

3. Background, paragraph 1, sentence 2. Can evidence be cited that supports this assertion?

Authors’ response: Yes, added to page 4.

4. Background, paragraph 2, sentence 2. can the "opportunity for revascularisation" be clarified for the stated context?

Authors’ response: We have revised this sentence to provide more clarity about the specific revascularisation techniques for these patients on page 4-5.

5. Background paragraph 2. I found myself asking "so what" to the information about the Romanos paper- does that paper report good reliability results, or does it raise concerns? What is the key point of the information given? This is not clear.

Authors’ response: We have completely rewritten this section to clarify the concerns in the literature (pg 5).

6. Methods, paragraph 1. Table 1 is reporting results, not methods.

Authors’ response: Moved to Results section on page 8.

7. Discussion, paragraph 3: Is there any evidence to support the speculation about why the reliability was lower for brachial pressures?

Authors’ response: No, speculation removed and discussion rewritten page 9 and 10.

Discretionary Revisions

1. Further definition of microvascular disease could be added

Authors’ response: We have defined “Microvascular disease” on page 4.