Author’s response to reviews

Title: Physical therapies for Achilles tendinopathy: systematic review and meta-analysis

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
Response to Reviewers' Comments

We thank the Associate Editor and reviewers for their additional comments on our paper. Below we provide a point-by-point response to the concerns raised by each reviewer. Reviewer comments are displayed in bold, and our responses given immediately below. Within the manuscript, changes have been highlighted in yellow.

**Reviewer 1:**

No additional amendments requested.

**Reviewer 2:**

1. **Abstract:** Results: The finding that a single RCT showed SWT to be effective when added to an eccentric exercise program may need to be incorporated into the results to justify the conclusions ‘...Shock wave therapy may represent an effective alternative’.

   Due to word limitations, we chose to focus on the major findings within the abstract. The conclusion that “Shock wave therapy may represent an effective alternative”, as stated in the abstract, reflects findings from pooled data (2 studies) of no difference between SWT and eccentric exercise. Thus, given that there was evidence from multiple individual RCTs regarding eccentric exercise, we interpreted this to mean that, based on limited evidence, SWT may represent an alternative to EE given findings from meta-analysis of no difference between the two. Further discussion regarding cautions with interpretation of evidence for SWT is included in the Discussion section of the main manuscript.

2. **Main document:** There are some areas with errors in spacing between words/references (e.g. pages 12, 16 and 18).

   We have thoroughly checked the spacing between words and references throughout the manuscript, and amended as required.

3. **Outcome measures:** Can the authors provide references for ‘Additional data was requested for six [ref] of the 19 studies, with three authors [ref] replying to correspondence and two [ref] providing sufficient data for further evaluation.’

   This has been added as suggested.

4. **Evidence for physical therapies, page 13, para 3 (EE versus SWT):** Were there two studies comparing SWT to EE (i.e. refs 25 and 26) (as described on page 15 para 2)? Please revise accordingly and modify the accompanying Forest plot (Figure 2) if so.

   Thank you for noting this inconsistency. This has been amended in both the manuscript and Figure 2.
5. Page 15, line 2: Please replace the hyphen with ‘to’ (i.e. 11 to 12).

This has been amended as requested.

6. References: Several references have capitalisations of all words in the title. Please amend accordingly.

This has been amended.

7. Reference 42: change ‘trail’ to ‘trial’.

This has been amended.

8. Tables: Some tables still contain vertical lines. Please remove these to be consistent with the journal guidelines.

On consultation of the ‘Instructions for authors’ published on the JFAR website, we added vertical lines to conform with the following statement:
“Columns and rows of data should be made visibly distinct by ensuring that the borders of each cell display as black lines.”
As such, the vertical lines remain in the tables; however, we are happy to amend this at the discretion of the Associate Editor.