Author's response to reviews

Title: 'Sepsis-related anemia' is absent at hospital presentation; a retrospective cohort analysis.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Reviewer's report
Title: 'Sepsis-related anemia' is absent at hospital presentation; a retrospective cohort analysis.
Version: 6
Date: 3 January 2015
Reviewer: Jean-Louis Vincent

Reviewer's report:
The paper has improved, but some changes are still necessary

I realize the authors did not cite and discuss the study by Nguyen et al (including myself) in Crit Care Med 2003 on the time course of hemoglobin levels in septic patients. This is important, as the message is quite similar.

R/ Thank you for pointing me to this article! Indeed, this is an important article with a quite similar message. I have incorporated this article in our discussion.

Other points:
- Results: "In the S-group, the Hb concentration at ICU admission was significantly lower in comparison to the Hb concentration at ED presentation (7.7 #} 1.1 versus 8.8 #} 1.1 mmol/l, p<0.001).": this is unclear. I suppose it means that it decreased over time. Maybe this should be combined with the next sentence.

R/ Indeed, this means that in those patients who were immediately admitted to the ICU after presentation and treatment at the ED, the Hb concentration at ICU admission is significantly lower compared to the Hb concentration at ED presentation. The drop in Hb is even greater in the S-group compared the drop in the C-group. We have tried to combine this sentence with the next sentence to make this more clear.

- Discussion: "Finally, sepsis itself may cause an increase in intravascular space. This increase in intravascular space may be due to the loss of vasomotor tone: what else could it be due to?"

R/ Thank you for your comment. Besides the loss of vasomotor tone also shedding of the glyocalyx can theoretically leads to an increase of intravascular space. Due to the fact that it is located on the luminal side to the endothelium and it sheds during sepsis. This issue is addressed in the text of our article.

- Next sentence: "intravenous fluid administration is necessary to counteract a reduction in cardiac output": not only that, but also to reach the typical hyperkinetic state.

R/ Thank you for your comment. Since we are not sure whether the hyperkinetic state is only an intrinsic quality of the disease itself, or may (partially) be explained by the therapeutic interventions such as fluid administration, we suggest the following text:... thus contributing to the typical hyperkinetic state.....

- Next sentence "In addition, shedding of the glyocalyx during sepsis has been described [12-14].": not only it has been described, it is considered as a fact.
R/ Thank you for your comment. It seems we were to modest. We have changed it in the text.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.