Author’s response to reviews

Title: Retinal capillary rarefaction in patients with untreated mild-moderate hypertension

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Author’s response to reviews:

We thank you for the helpful comments

1. We would like to ask for further clarification regarding the nature of this study. If this was prospective and patients were actively recruited please state this. If this was retrospective using data from the patients who participated in the clinical trials please state this.

Answer: The study was retrospective using data from patients who participated in previous clinical trials. This has now been stated more clearly in the first sentence under “study design.”

2. We would also like to ask for further clarification as to whether you obtained ethics approval for this comparative study. If the need for ethics approval was waived by an IRB or is deemed unnecessary according to national regulations, please clearly state this, including the name of the IRB or a reference to the relevant legislation.

Answer: According to our national regulations no further ethics approval for this retrospective comparative analysis is required. The data has been retrieved from 4 studies (www.clinicaltrials.gov: NCT01318395, NCT00627952, NCT00152698, NCT01319344) that all have been approved by our University Ethical committee.
3. Please remove the phrase “The financial sponsors did not contribute to data collection, interpretation of the data, or the decision to approve and submit the manuscript” from the Ethics approval and consent to participate section and include it in the Funding section instead.

Answer: It has been done as suggested.

4. Thank you for providing the details to access your data in the Availability of data and materials section. Please note that we require this data to be released prior to publication as we need to check all links and references to outside sources to ensure they are active and data is accessible to readers. They cannot be changed after publication and links or references to data sets are commonly mistyped and therefore not accessible to readers. While I understand that you may wish to wait until publication, we require their release prior to formal acceptance so that editors can ensure links are active and the data is accessible to readers.

If this does not seem acceptable to you, we can return your manuscript and so that you can edit the statement under availability of data and material to read ‘The datasets created during and/or analysed during the current study available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.’

Answer: Access to our data has now been provided.

5. Please use initials only rather than full names in the Authors' contributions section.

Answer: It has been done as suggested.

6. Please move the Abbreviations to just before the Declarations.

Answer: It has been done as suggested.
7. Please provide, after the References, a section titled “Additional files” where you list the following information about your supplementary file: * File name (e.g. Additional file 1), * Title of data, * Description of data. Please ensure also that all additional files have been cited in the main manuscript.

Answer: It has been done as suggested.

8. It has come to our attention that throughout the manuscript there is significant text overlap with other publications. While we understand that you may wish to express some of the same ideas contained in these publications, please be aware that we cannot condone the use of text from previously published work. We would therefore be grateful if you could provide a justification for the overlap in text between your manuscript and other sources. Please be informed that we cannot proceed with handling your manuscript before this issue is resolved, and the sections of text in question have been reformulated. The report has been attached to further help your revisions. Please note that the software used to detect overlaps is imperfect and highlights two or more consecutive matching words, therefore, please just focus on those whole sentences/paragraphs highlighted. If this study uses methodology from a previously published work, please provide a summarizing statement in the methodology together with a citation to the original paper.

Answer: We thank you for drawing our attention at this important issue. The sections of text in question have been reformulated and methodology from a previously published work has been summarized and cited to the original paper.

9. Please change the heading ‘Introduction’ to ‘Background’ to conform to the journal style.

Answer: It has been done as suggested.

10. We require a ‘Conclusions’ heading before your article can be handed to our Productions department. Please include a Conclusions section in your article after the Discussion section and before the Abbreviations.

Answer: A conclusion section is now provided.
11. Please include the email addresses for all authors on the title page. The corresponding author should still be indicated.

Answer: It has been done as suggested.

12. Please submit your revised manuscript and supplemental files as a clean copy without any tracked changes, coloured or highlighted text, as these are no longer required at this stage of the editorial process.