Author’s response to reviews

Title: Long-term survival and quality of life in Jehovah's Witnesses after cardiac surgery: a case control study.

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor,

First of all, we would like to thank Mohamed Mohamed Rahouma Ahmed for his very constructive commentary on our manuscript. We considered all his suggestions:

Language revision is essential e.g.
- Ø in abstract method section: undergoing should be underwent
- Ø Line 21: in abstract conclusion; please change "observes" to "follows".
- Ø Page 6 Line 34: inappropriate use of colon (:) was frequent. Please fix this.
- Ø Page 7 Line 44: please fix it to be "the obtained prediction curve".
- Ø Page 8 line 31: it should be "informed consent. Line 34: it should be : with an informed ".etc
- Ø Page 13: it should be Kaplan Meier curves (not Meyer) and also edit other legend accordingly.

All of these points have been implemented in our manuscript as well as other revisions of the language.

I wonder how this study has trial registration No. although it is not randomized controlled trial. The policy of our institution is to record all studies who includes patients other than case reports.

Line 29: please do not put any reference in the abstract.
The reference has been removed.

Line 45: please be consistent in writing your abbreviation (JHW vs JhW).
The abbreviations have been standardized.
In introduction section, more details and references needed to be added. Don't comment on your prior work only. The introduction has been deeply revised.

Page 4, Line 52: please add proper reference to MacNew questionnaire and try to add a copy of the used question to the supplements. The initial validation reference was added, as was the reference of its validation in the French version. The questionnaire is subject to copyright. The in-line path to the calculation software is mentioned in the text. We submitted the questionnaire to the patients by means of a telephone interview, and encoded the answers obtained in the planned software (mentioned in the text now). According to each answer, determines a quality of life score and provides an assessment for each sphere investigated. We thus obtain 4 scores: global, physical, emotional and social.

Page 5 line 1: Selection of HRQoL over 2 weeks prior to questionnaire administration is a weird timeframe as those who underwent surgery 1 years ago will not be similar to those who had surgery 1 month ago. Please add explanation to that. Possible suggestion is to mention the minimum time from operation till questionnaire administration among your groups. The minimum time between the intervention and the application of the questionnaire was 4 years. This is now mentioned in the text.

Page 5 Line 18: continuous variables should be assessed for normality then you can use t-test (mean and SD) if normally distributed or Mann Whitney test (median and interquartile range) if not. Please state that you tested for normality and edit as appropriate. We propose to rewrite the statistical part like this:
We performed an analysis of data comparing JhW to control groups. We performed statistical analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Science software v. 22 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA). Kolmogorov Smirnov test was applied to verify the normality of the distribution of the continuous variables. Continuous variables were compared using Student t test or Mann Whitney test as appropriate. Dichotomous variables were compared using the $\chi^2$ test. Survival was analyzed using the Kaplan Meier method and the data were compared with the log-rank test. Median follow up time was estimated as the time corresponding to the 50th percentile taken from reverse Kaplan Meier analysis. Statistical significance was defined as $p<0.05$

Page 5, Line 31: please add proper reference to spss program. We added this to the suggested statistical paragraph.

Page 5, Line 41: Please change programmed to elective. We change the sentence.

Page 5, Line 47: please avoid putting any reference in the result section. We removed the reference.

Page 5, Line 57: please add the method of calculation of median follow up to the method section and add proper reference. There are many method to get it with reversed Kaplan Meier method being reported as the most robust. In which you can put alive patients as "events". For more details, you can read this: https://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/healthsciences/research/biostats/yougsurv/pdf/MShanyinde.pdf We added the reverse Kaplan Meier method in the statistical paragraph (This is how we found this
time that we mentioned) It should be added the p=0.73. I am sending you the Figure also but I do not think that it is needed.

Page 5 Line 60: please put respectively after groups.
We change the sentence.

Page 6 Line 6: please report how you got p value.
We got after KM analysis; I think as it is written causes some misunderstanding. I propose to eliminate the phrase “Median estimated survival and survival at 0/5/10/15 and 20 years are expressed in Table 1”. There was no difference between the two groups” and put the (p=0.37) just before Figure 1

Page 6 Line 16: This is the main limitation of this study (14 vs 18 patients had HRQoL assessment) and this should be clearly stated at the end of discussion section under a title limitation of our study. In addition you can state that future multi-institutional series will be highly recommended.
We created a section “Limitation of our study” and the end of the discussion.

Page 7 Line 5: Please rephrase this sentence.
We change the sentence.

Page 7 Line 16: Please mention number of patients assessed in reference 10.
We added the number.

Page 7 Line 39-44: Sorry, I didn't understand this sentence and its appropriateness as the usual Kaplan Meier curves will be the usual sufficient method. Please explain or delete it.
Table 1 and figure 1: please add patients at risk to Kaplan Meier curves plot.
I think the table causes confusion. The no 31 51, 21 45 etc are the patients at risk. Usually this table is altogether with the photo, I think this causes the misunderstanding. I propose to eliminate the table 1 and change figure 1 (in the following the manuscript)

Table 2: it is strongly advised to use boxplots to show this data even as supplement.
We added the figure.

We hope that all the changes made to the manuscript will make it more readable and clear.

With all our consideration,

Pierre Wauthy