Author’s response to reviews

Title: "Blood transfusion in elderly patients with chronic anemia: a qualitative analysis of the general practitioners' attitudes"

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear editor,

We thank the reviewers for their encouragement and acute comments. This point-by-point response letter accompanies a revised manuscript. We believe that it has been significantly improved after this review and hope that these modifications will allow publication.

Reviewer #1: According to your suggestion, a table has been realized to summarize the replies. For most questions, main spontaneous replies are summarized with the number of occurrence. Because the study is qualitative, we choose not to precise the percentage, as the data are only indicative and should not be interpreted as a quantitative survey. Two questions do not appear in that table as the replies were too heterogeneous.

We added “Table 1” and precised in the text:

“The table 1 summarizes main spontaneous replies to our questions, with the number of occurrence. Two questions do not appear in that table as the replies were too heterogeneous.”

Reviewer #2:

Comment 1: The interview guide was based on chronic anemia requiring transfusion, without details on etiology. As stated in our introduction, “transfusion may prove necessary if there is no effective etiological treatment or if the anemia is of unknown etiology.”
The cause of anemia did not appear in GPs discourse as a key factor to decide transfusion, probably because the option of transfusion was only considered when other options (iron supplementation, erythropoietin…) were not possible. We added in the results:

“The cause of chronic anemia did not appear as a determining factor in the decision-making process of transfusion.”

Comment 2: We selected a purposive sample of GPs, with heterogeneous age, gender, place of work (rural or urban) and seniority.

We added in Material and Methods this sentence:

“Twenty-nine GPs have been selected at professional meetings as a purposive sample, with heterogeneous age, gender, place of work (rural or urban) and seniority. (…). Twenty GPs seemed a number of participants high enough to reach data saturation.”

With this reference:


Comment 3: We hope that our replies to reviewer 1, with the add of a table, will give more quantitation of the data that was collected. However, we choose not to precise the percentage, as the data are only indicative and should not be interpreted as a quantitative survey. Two questions do not appear in that table as the replies were too heterogeneous to be summarized.

Comment 4: Although several questions (1, 5, 6, 7) could refer to French or International recommendations, none of the GPs explicitly relied on any specific guidelines.

We added

“None of the GPs referred to any specific guidelines.”

Yours faithfully,

Dr Aline Corvol