**Author’s response to reviews**

**Title:** Does the implementation of a care pathway for patients with hip or knee osteoarthritis lead to fewer diagnostic imaging and referrals by general practitioners? A pre-post-implementation study of claims data.

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**Version: 4 Date: 22 Oct 2019**

**Author’s response to reviews:**

Elizabeth Debney

Editor

BMC Family Practice

Maastricht, the Netherlands, October 22th, 2019

Paper title: Does the implementation of a care pathway for patients with osteoarthritis lead to less diagnostics and referrals by general practitioners? A pre-post-implementation study of claims data.

Paper ID: FAMP-D-19-00051R3

Dear Ms. Debney,

Thank you very much that based on the reviewers’ reports and your own assessment as Editor our revised manuscript entitled “Does the implementation of a care pathway for patients with osteoarthritis lead to fewer diagnostics and referrals by general practitioners? A pre-post-implementation study of claims data” is potentially accepted for publication in BMC Family Practice. We have carefully considered the editorial points raised. Please find below our reaction concerning the essential revisions indicated with symbol ‘&gt;’. Furthermore, we adapted the
manuscript according to the style and formatting guidelines where needed throughout the manuscript. The manuscript is uploaded as a single, final, clean version.

We really hope our manuscript will be accepted for publication and are looking forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Also on behalf of all authors,

Esther H.A. van den Bogaart, MSc

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Editor Comments:

Comment 1

Please confirm whether your study was submitted to and approved by your institutional ethics committee and include a statement to this effect in your “Ethics approval and consent to participate” section. Please also ensure that the full name of your ethics committee is included in this statement. 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.

We rewrote the “Ethics approval and consent to participate” section to address these points.

Declarations, line 23, page 22

Ethics approval and consent to participate

This study was submitted to and approved by the Medical Research and Ethics Committee of Zuyderland Medical Centre and Zuyd University of Applied Sciences (Application number: 15-N-123). Data used in this study were already available and patients were not physically involved in the research. In addition, participant consent was not necessary as this study used de-identified
data which was obtained as part of evaluation of patient care and which was confirmed by the Medical Research and Ethics Committee.

Comment 2

Please clarify whether any administrative permissions were required to access the raw data. If so please state who granted permission in the “Ethics approval and consent to participate” section.

Administrative permissions were required to access the raw data of the health care insurance company. We rewrote the “Ethics approval and consent to participate” section to clarify this.

Declarations, line 4, page 23

In order to gain access to the data of health insurance company CZ, administrative permission was required. Therefore, health insurance company CZ and Maastricht University signed an agreement for data access.

Comment 3

Please remove the funding information from the Acknowledgements and include it in the Funding section instead. If you have no further acknowledgements please put “Not Applicable” in the Acknowledgements section.

We removed the funding information from the Acknowledgements and rewrote the Acknowledgements section.

Declarations, line 7, page 24

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the insurer CZ, especially Daniëlle Baenen and Marian Jacobs, and Zuyderland Medical Centre, especially Tamara Rademakers, for their contributions in providing us with data. Finally, we acknowledge all members of the project group ‘Beter Bewegen bij Artrose’ of MCC Omnes for their effort.

Comment 4

Please consider the list of authors as it currently stands with reference to our guidelines regarding qualification for authorship (http://www.biomedcentral.com/submissions/editorial-policies#authorship).
Currently, the contributions of authors PO and PD do not automatically qualify them for authorship. Please provide clarification on their contributions, or remove their names from the list of authors and place them in the “Acknowledgements” section instead.

if you change the list of authors, please complete and return a change of authorship request form - https://resource-cms.springernature.com/springer-cms/rest/v1/content/7454878/data/v5

We rewrote the authors’ contribution section.

Declarations, line 1, page 24

Authors’ contributions

EB, MK, MS, and DR designed the study. EB performed the statistical analysis and drafted the manuscript. RO and PD contributed to the interpretation of the data. MK, MS, RO, PD, and DR read the manuscript and contributed to the critical revision of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the submission of the final draft.

Comment 5

In the authors’ information section please refer to authors using their initials. Note this section should not be used to describe any competing interests.

We decide to exclude the authors’ information section since this section is optional.

Comment 6

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