Author's response to reviews

Title: Vitamin B12 and folate levels in healthy swiss senior citizens

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COVERING LETTER

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To the Editors of
BMC Geriatrics
Mrs Giulia Mangiameli
Executive Editor BioMed Central

Liebefeld, 9 october 2014

VITAMIN B 12 AND FOLATE LEVELS IN HEALTHY SWISS SENIOR CITIZENS

Dear Madam, dear Sir

We wish to submit the manuscript with the above mentioned title to BMC Geriatrics

This was MS ID 3261700361435128 submitted to BMC Medicine # rejected # recommended for submission to BMC Geriatrics.

Abstract: 238 words, text 3355 words, 1 table, 5 figures and 66 references.

We have directed our attention to the vitamin B12/folate vitamins, none the less because these vitamins have been uncovered recently to extend their importance
way beyond haematology (ref 1) into a multimorbidity list of diseases coming up in the elderly. A major message seems to us the maintenance of normal vitamin B12 levels, more than folate, even in old age; albeit we do not think that this finding is due to largely practised injection/p.o. substitution hereabout but rather stands for compulsive preservation by these vitamins of a healthy senescence characterized with our cohort; the data have been analyzed by gender revealing a slight difference as outlined, whereas the race was Caucasian exclusively.

Part of the results were accepted for print as an abstract at the 19 Congress of the European Haematology Association Meeting in Milan (www.ehaweb.org) – but the extent of analysis including surrogate markers and kidney function is unpublished/original in this full paper and has not been submitted elsewhere. The work will be exposed as Poster Nr. 31 at the Annual Assembly of the Swiss Society of Clinical Chemistry, end of this month in Basel (www.congrex-switzerland.com/sgkc2014)

Most, if not all, vitamin B12 and folate serum levels studied in the elderly so far have been done in care seekers, patients, geriatric wards or rehabilitation institutions for orthopaedic conditions.

Originality of this work is based on:

(i) the vitamin B12/folate levels and their putative changes are derived from healthy elderly subjects.

(ii) the relationship between vitamin B12 and folate levels and more particularly of their surrogate markers MMA and holoTC confronted to kidney function in the elderly, a consideration which many studies have neglected so far.

(iii) The cohort here studied is from the data warehouse established in our vitamin D paper (ref 32).

The study was carried out with a written consent of all participants according to the requirement of the local ethical committees.

We hesitate to let published figure 5 as part of the full manuscript – it could also go as an additional file.

Should the article become acceptable for BMC Geriatrics, then the link will be tagged with the full study protocol at our institutional website www.seniorlabor.ch.

The coauthors and myself will be ready to make amendments should BMC Geriatrics consider publication of our work.

Sincerely

Urs E. Nydegger, M.D.