Author’s response to reviews

Title: Overweight or obese BMI is associated with earlier, but not later survival after common acute illnesses

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Olga Theou, MSc, PhD
Editor, BMC Geriatrics

Dear Dr. Theou:

Please accept our revised manuscript “Obesity is associated with earlier, but not later survival after common acute illnesses” (BGTC-D-17-00326R1) by Hallie Prescott and Virginia Chang for reconsideration for publication as an original research article in BMC Geriatrics.

Point-by-point response to review comments:

C1: Abstract: Please add the in the following sentence "Using cox proportional hazards model, we examined the association between overweight or obese BMI (≥25.0 kg/m2) and mortality to 5 years after hospital admission, adjusted for potential confounders measured at the same time as BMI, including age, race, sex, education, partnership status, income, wealth, and smoking status.”

R1: Thanks for catching this error, we have added “the” to this sentence (line 76 of abstract).

C2: Results: The paper could be strengthened by a mention of the mortality rates for the BMI Underweight group as this group is within Table 1.

R2: Consistent with prior literature and clinical experience, underweight BMI was associated with increased mortality in all unadjusted and adjusted analyses. We added the following sentence to the results: “Underweight patients had the highest 1-year mortality: 64.9%, 59.9%, and 66.2% following CHF, pneumonia, and AMI hospitalizations, respectively.” (Lines 280-282).
C3: Discussion: The paper could be strengthened further with a mention of the limitations of BMI (and whether any other measures of adiposity or body composition was/was not available for this study) within the limitations section. BMI does not capture body compositional changes with ageing i.e. fat redistribution, sarcopenia, and an increase in fat mass, and is also considered one of factors contributing to paradoxical results.

R3: We have added the following sentence to the limitations: “Additional measures of adiposity (e.g. bioelectrical impedance, waist circumference)—which may better reflect fat mass and distribution—were not available.” (lines 416-417).

C4: Conclusion: Please change is to with.

"In older Americans, overweight or obese BMI was associated with improved survival to 1 year following hospitalization for congestive heart failure, pneumonia, and acute myocardial infarction."

R4: Thanks, we changed “is” to “with” in line 433.

We appreciate the time and thoughtful comments of the reviewers and editor, and look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

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