Author’s response to reviews

Title: Are self-reported gastrointestinal symptoms among older adults associated with increased intestinal permeability and psychological distress?

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Dr Cummings,

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to improve our manuscript. We hereby submit a revised version of our manuscript BGTC-17-00341 after having carefully considered the editors' comments and suggestions.

We have addressed the editors’ suggestions and revised the manuscript accordingly. See point-by-point response below.
We hope that you now will find our manuscript suitable for publication in BMC Geriatrics and are looking forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Ida Schoultz, PhD
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Point-by-point response to the editor:

1. We note that the order of authors has changed since original submission of the manuscript. In line with COPE guidelines, BioMed Central requires written confirmation from all authors that they agree with any proposed changes in authorship of submitted manuscripts or published articles.

In such cases, we use a standardised form which we would request you and your co-authors to complete. The change in authorship form can be found from the link on the following page: https://www.biomedcentral.com/submissions/editorial-policies#authorship

All instructions can be found on the form, please treat the 'current authorship' section as the original authorship. Please return the form within 14 days by email to the Editorial Office with all author signatures (including those newly added/removed).

We have noted that the name of author 2 has changed since first submission
Reply: We apologise for not communicating this properly and thank the Editor for pointing this out. The second author Dr Lina Östlund-Lagerström recently got married and is currently undergoing a change in surname from Östlund-Lagerström to Tingö, thus the second author is the same person as in the original submission. However, as Dr Lina had the surname Östlund-Lagerström during the original submission we will proceed with this name for this manuscript. This is also coherent with her former research publications on older adults. We have thus reverted the surname Tingö back to Östlund-Lagerström and the initials LÖL instead of LT. All changes can be viewed in the author list and email list on page 1, and the Author contributions on page 18, lines 354-357.

2. In order to be in line with journal requirements, please include the following headings within your manuscript: Background, Methods, Results, Discussion, Conclusions

Reply: We have corrected the headings accordingly to the journals requirements: Introduction has now been exchanged to Background on page 4, line 53. Method has now been corrected to Methods on page 5, line 79. Conclusion has been corrected to Conclusions on page 16, line 316.

3. Currently, the statement in your “consent for publication” section of your declarations is incorrect. Consent for publication refers to consent for the publication of identifying images or other personal or clinical details of participants that compromise anonymity. Seeing as this is not applicable to your manuscript please state “Not Applicable” in this section.

Reply: We apologise for this misunderstanding and thank the Editor for clarifying this to us. We have now corrected our statement with “Not Applicable” on page page 17, line 336.
4. We would also like to ask for you to provide more justification for the contributions of SA and DR* as currently they do not automatically qualify for authorship. Contribution to the listed tasks alone, does not usually justify authorship.

An 'author' is generally considered to be someone who has made substantive intellectual contributions to a published study. According to the ICMJE guidelines, to qualify as an author one should have:

a) made substantial contributions to conception and design, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data; AND

b) been involved in drafting the manuscript or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND

c) given final approval of the version to be published. Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content; AND

d) agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

Anyone listed as an author must be included in this section. If you choose to change your author list you will need to fill out a change in authorship form and send it by email to the Editorial office to be approved by the Editor. The form can be found here: https://www.biomedcentral.com/getpublished/editorial-policies#authorship.

Anyone who contributed towards the article who does not meet the criteria for authorship can be acknowledged in the ‘Acknowledgements’ section
Reply: We thank the Editor for pointing this out and we apologise for not making all authors valuable contributions clearer in earlier versions of the manuscript. Professor Dirk Repsilber (DR2) contributed with essential knowledge in bioinformatics and statistics in the design of the study and we apologise that this information was missing in the previous version. Professor Repsilbers’ contribution greatly facilitated the data analysis process. In addition Professor Repsilber took part in the drafting and revision of the manuscript, particularly the methods section of the manuscript. Dr Samal Algilani and Dr Dara Rasoal are nurses with extensive research experience. In addition, they have worked in care centres for older adults and have extensive experience in the practical work of elderly. In the outlined study they acquired all blood samples, handled the faecal samples and performed parts of the blood sample analysis. Furthermore they made sure all questionnaires were filled out properly and took part in the data analysis. They offered help and care in an excellent way to our participants during their visits. Their clinical expertise was important in interpreting the data from particularly the blood samples as well as the questionnaire data. In addition, they took part in the drafting and revision of the manuscript particularly regarding psychological distress among elderly. We apologise for not making their important contribution clearer earlier. The authors’ contribution section has now been updated to reflect SA, DR1 and DR2 valuable and essential contribution, page 18.

5. We note that two authors have the same initials (DR). To distinguish between them in the Authors’ Contributions section please designate them as DR1 and DR2, with DR1 corresponding to Dara Rasoal, chosen because this name is furthest up the author list.

Reply: We have changed the designations of DR (Dara Rasoal) to DR1 and DR* (Dirk Repsilber) to DR2 according to the Editors comment. These changes have been carried out in the initials of the email list on page 1 and in the Authors contribution section on page 18, lines 353-358.
6. Please provide figure legends under a separate heading of 'Figure Legends' after the References. If Figure titles/legends are within the main text of the manuscript, please move them.

Reply: The new heading “Figure Legends” with Figure titles and text (Fig. 1 -3) is now placed directly below the references on pages 22-23, lines 515-536. Table 1 was pushed back to pages 24-25.

7. At this stage, please upload your manuscript as a single, final, clean version that does not contain any tracked changes, comments, highlights, strikethroughs or text in different colours. All relevant tables/figures/additional files should also be clean versions. Figures (and additional files) should remain uploaded as separate files.

Reply: According to the Editors instructions we have now uploaded a single, final, clean version without any colour highlights. All additional files are clean and uploaded separately.