Author’s response to reviews

Title: Relative importance of four functional measures as predictors of 15-year mortality in the older Dutch population

Authors:

ELISABETH EEKHOFF (emw.eekhoff@vumc.nl)
Natasja van Schoor (nm.vanschoor@vumc.nl)
Joseph Biedermann (jossib@gmail.com)
Mirjam Oosterwerff (mirjam.oosterwerff@catharinaziekenhuis.nl)
Renate de Jongh (RT.deJongh@vumc.nl)
Nathalie Bravenboer (n.bravenboer@vumc.nl)
Mireille van Poppel (mnm.vanpoppel@vumc.nl)
Dorly Deeg (djh.deeg@vumc.nl)

Version: 2 Date: 02 Feb 2019

Author’s response to reviews:

Second Letter to the reviewers:

Date: January 31th 2019

BGTC-D-18-00469

Relative importance of lower-body performance, handgrip strength, lung function, and self-reported functional limitations as predictors of 15-year mortality in the older Dutch population

ELISABETH M.W. EEKHOFF, Ph.D., M.D.; Natasja M van Schoor, Ph.D.; Joseph S. Biedermann, Ph.D., M.D.; Mirjam M Oosterwerff, Pd.D., M.D.; Renate de Jongh, Ph.D., M.D.; Nathalie Bravenboer, Ph.D.; Mireille N.M. van Poppel, Prof. dr.; Dorly J.H. Deeg, Prof. dr.

BMC Geriatrics
Dear editor,

We appreciate your positive judgment on our manuscript and have included all your good comments and advices that we have all considered to improve our manuscript again.

Below we give our responses with associated track changes in the manuscript.

We hope that you will find our manuscript ready for publication and we look forward to your decision.

Thank you for all your help.

Kind regards,

on behalf of the co-authors, including Dorly Deeg and Natasja Schoor,

Marelise

Please find below our responses to your questions:

1a) Editorial Comments:

Please ensure all the subheadings and format of your Declarations section are as outlined in the submission guidelines.

Response: we checked this again and changed the text accordingly as shown below.

1. All authors made substantial contributions to conception (EE, NS, JB, MO, NB, MP, DD) and or design (EE, NS, JB, MO, NB, MP, DD), or acquisition of data (EE, NS, JB, MO, MP, DD), or analysis and interpretation of data (EE, NS, MP, DD)

2. All authors were involved in drafting the manuscript (EE, NS, DD) or revising it critically for important intellectual content (EE, NS, JB, MO, RJ, NB, MP, DD)

3. All Authors gave final approval of the version to be published (EE, NS, JB, MO, RJ, NB, MP, DD). Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content (EE, NS, JB, MO, RJ, NB, MP, DD)
4. All authors 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 (EE, NS, JB, MO, RJ, NB, MP, DD).

1b) BMC Geriatrics operates a policy of open peer review, which means that you will be able to see the names of the reviewers who provided the reports via the online peer review system. We encourage you to also view the reports there, via the action links on the left-hand side of the page, to see the names of the reviewers.

   Response: we viewed the reports and names of the reviewers. Thank you for this opportunity.

2) Reviewer reports:

Siti Setiati (Reviewer 2): Thank you for the responses. I notice the effort you've made to take our feedbacks into account and I really appreciate. The background and discussion is now clearer. Overall, I think you conveyed valid, interesting points and found no problem with the content of the manuscript. However, If you continue to improve the language, it will definitely improve this article since some sentences are still awkward to read and will benefit from revisions. Here is some examples:

2a) 2.2.2 Background should explain what is physical function and elaborate the effect of ageing and physical function. (page 6 line 6).

   Response: The text has been changed into the following sentences - Ageing is accompanied by loss of physical function. Physical function is the common term for a combination of endurance, muscle power, balance, and coordination, which capacities are related to exercise, health status, and genetic and environmental factors. With ageing, from early midlife the maximal physical function decreases slowly. - COMMENTS: please recheck this statement, in the manuscript that I received, the sentence "Ageing is accompanied by loss of physical function" was deleted. In addition, to provide an example of my point about language improvement, here is my suggestion for the writing: Ageing process is accompanied by the loss of physical function. Physical function is the common term used to describe the combination of endurance, muscle power…. Etc. the maximal physical function decreases gradually due to ageing since early midlife.

   Response: We thank the reviewer for the good and carefully comments. We changed the sentence accordingly into:- The ageing process is accompanied by the loss of physical function. Physical function is the common term used to describe the combination of endurance, muscle
power, balance and coordination whose capacity is related to exercise, health status, and genetic and environmental factors. The maximal physical function decreases gradually due to ageing since early midlife.

2b) 2.2.4 Explanation of self-reported functional limitations as "experienced difficulty doing activity of daily living" needs grammatical correction and should be rephrased for it to make sense. (page 6 line 11-13)

Response: the explanation has been changed into the following sentence on page 6 line 11-13: "Experienced difficulty in performing activities of daily living."

COMMENTS: it needs grammatical correction, as a suggestion: ..self-reported measures, such as reports of experiencing difficulty in performing activities of daily living (i.e. self-reported functional limitations)

Response: We thank the reviewer for the good advice and changed the text accordingly: -self-reported measures, such as reports of experiencing difficulty in performing activities of daily living (i.e. self-reported functional limitations)-

2c) 2.3.4 How many was the total participants in LASA cycle 95-96? How many had sufficient data to be included in this study? Were they all included? What's the reason for exclusion? (page 8 line 1-5)

Response: Starting from 727 men and 778 women, we included all participants with data on each test. This number varied across tests, with a minimum of 680 men and 702 women in the analyses including all tests

COMMENTS: the sentence is unclear and needs to be rephrased

Response: We rephrased the sentence into: -The sample for the current study consisted of participants aged 65 through 88 years as of January 1, 1996, who took part in the main and medical interview of the second LASA cycle (1995/1996) and from whom data were available on lower-body performance, handgrip strength, peak flow, functional limitations, and mortality status during 15 years of follow-up (N=1,505; 727 men and 778 women). In total, 695 men and 734 women had data on lower-body performance; 727 men and 778 women had data on hand
grip strength, 722 men and 751 women had data on peak flow, 717 men and 760 women had data on functional limitations. The exact number of participants available for analysis further depended on the covariables included in the model.

3) Soham Al Snih, M.D., Ph.D. (Reviewer 3): Manuscript Number: BGTC-D-18-00469R1

Title: Relative importance of four functional measures as predictors of 15-year mortality in the older Dutch population

All comments were addressed.