Author’s response to reviews

Title: The value of nonoperative versus operative treatment of frail institutionalized elderly patient with a proximal femoral fracture in the shade of life (FRAIL-HIP); protocol for a multicenter observational cohort study

Authors:

Pieter Joosse (p.joosse@nwz.nl)
Sverre Loggers (s.loggers@nwz.nl)
Marc van de Ree (m.vanderee@etz.nl)
Romke Van Balen (r.van_balen@lumc.nl)
Jeroen Steens (j.steens@westfriesgasthuis.nl)
Rutger Zuurmond (r.g.zuurmond@isala.nl)
Taco Gosens (T.gosens@etz.nl)
Sven Van Helden (s.h.van.helden@isala.nl)
Suzanne Polinder (s.polinder@erasusmc.nl)
Hanna Willems (h.c.willems@amc.nl)
Esther Van Lieshout (e.vanlieshout@erasusmc.nl)
FRAIL-HIP study group (frail-hip@nwz.nl)

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Response to Editor Comments:

1. Please shorten the "Ethics approval and consent to participate" section. Regarding the ethics, please only include that Medical Research Ethics Committee (MREC) of VU University Medical Center exempted the study according to the article 7 of the Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act. Please include a reference for this. Regarding the consent to participate, please leave your statement as it is.

Response: The section had been shortened and the reference number has been added as requested (page 37).
2. Please make sure all authors qualify for authorship. Please note that only authors that designed the trial or substantially contributed to drafting and revising the manuscript qualify as authors. Authors conducting the study do not qualify as authors of the Study protocol. Guidance and criteria for authorship can be found in our editorial policies at https://www.biomedcentral.com/getpublished/editorial-policies#authorship.

Response: All authors listed, including the investigators at the participating sites, were involved in setting up the study and reviewed and approved the manuscript under review. The investigators at the participating sites are now listed as group author named “FRAIL- HIP study group” (title page; pages 1-2). Could you please make sure that their names and affiliations will be mentioned and linked on PubMed, should you decide to publish this protocol.

3. Since you are not disclosing any sensitive information about any of the participants, "Consent for publication" does not apply. Please state "Not applicable" under this section

Response: This content of this section has been updated as requested (page 37).

4. Please explain how you will assure approximately even distribution between arms, since patients choose their own treatment.

Response: We cannot influence decision making for individual patients and therefore equal distribution between arms. Hospitals could only participate if they were willing to implement the shared decision process as intended. In the inclusion period so far we have seen an even distribution between arms, so we do not expect this to be an issue. No changes were made to the text.

5. Could you please confirm that the stars (**) should be present in the last column of Table 1. From our understanding of the Methods, it seems that the last column should not have the disclaimer "Only if patients died prior to that follow-up moment", is this correct?

Response: Thank you for pointing this out, there was indeed a slight mistake in Table 1. The questionnaire on satisfaction with the chosen treatment (for patients/caregivers) is planned at the last visit (i.e., last column), so the ** have been removed from last column. For all other visits, these questionnaires only apply if the patient has died prior to that visit. The ** for the QODD questionnaire is mentioned correctly in the last column, as that only applies if the patients has died prior to that visit.

6. Please include a CONSORT flow diagram as part of the manuscript. For guidelines: http://www.equator-network.org/

Response: This study is an observational study (case series), could it be that the editor means STROBE instead of CONSORT? A flow chart of the study will be included in the final manuscript reporting the data of our study. A flow chart for the conduct of the study has been added as requested (Figure 1).