Author’s response to reviews

Title: Scent dog identification of samples from COVID-19 patients – a pilot study

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Dr. Archer,
Many thanks again for your prompt handling of our manuscript. We hereby submit our revised manuscript entitled ‘Scent dog identification of samples from COVID-19 patients – a pilot study’.

The manuscript will be submitted with the changes incorporated in the text. The comments of the editor are thoroughly discussed and addressed individually and detailed in the list below. We hope that our changes address all concerns raised by the editor.

We would like to thank again the editor for the comments and constructive guidance. These have significantly improved the quality of the paper.

We hope you agree with our corrections and we are looking forward to your response at your earliest convenience.

Kindest regards,
Holger A. Volk

Editor comments:
1 - With regards to the accompanying Data Note we have a few options (more details in separate email, please contact us for any questions before resubmitting):
   A. Include a link to the current repository in the main article (which at the moment you have), revise the Data Note with additional data, deposit data under a new repository link, resubmit when ready and we link submissions up post-publication without holding up the BMC Infectious Diseases article.
   B. If you decide not to revise the Data Note, you will need to withdraw it. In this case, you can still keep the current repository link in the main article OR incorporate the additional data from the repository into the main article and remove the link from your “availability of data and materials” statement – this is completely up to you.
   Thank you for this comment. We would like to decide for option A and we will resubmit the Data Note as soon as possible.

2 - Please add sub-headings to the Methods section.
   This has been changed as requested. We added sub-headings to the Method section in lines 76, 85, 117 and 141.

3 - Please include a methods sub-section detailing how the sensitivity and specificity analysis was performed.
   Thank you for this comment. A sub-section has been added as suggested. The diagnostic sensitivity, diagnostic specificity, positive predictive values and negative predictive values were calculated according to Trevethan (2017). See line 141 to 145.
4 - Please move the references and the additional file legends to after the declarations. Thank you for this comment. It has been changed as suggested and you can now find the references and additional file legends in lines 289-377.

5 - Please move any statement regarding written informed consent from the methods into the ‘Ethics approval and consent to participate’ section. The statements have been moved to the mentioned section in lines 242-257.

6 - We note that you have included a ‘Consent for publication’ section in the Declarations. 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. Thank you for this comment. It has been changed as suggested in line 249.

7 - Please remove the copy of the manuscript with tracked changes from the manuscript file. The manuscript copy with tracked changes has been removed.

8 - 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. Please ensure that all figures, tables and additional/supplementary files are cited within the text. Thank you for this comment. All of the points have been addressed.