Author’s response to reviews

Title: Current status of collaborative relationships between dialysis facilities and dental facilities in Japan: results of a nationwide survey

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor,

I am enclosing here with a revised manuscript “Current status of collaborative relationships between dialysis facilities and dental facilities in Japan: results of a nationwide survey” by Masami Yoshioka, Yasuhiko Shirayama, Issei Imoto, Daisuke Hinode, Shizuko Yanagisawa and Yuko Takeuchi, which we should like to have published in BMC Nephrology.

A point-by-point response to the reviewers’ comments are as follows:

Reviewer: J. Kevin Tucker

Reviewer’s report:

1) Major compulsory revisions: The manuscript is of interest because it proposes a link between dental care and outcomes of patients on dialysis.

That link would be strengthened if we had information on outcomes—or surrogate outcomes—for dialysis patients who receive dental care versus those who do not receive dental care.

The manuscript should include information on inflammatory markers, namely serum albumin, ferritin, and CRP if available for patients followed in clinics with dental facilities versus those followed in clinics without dental facilities.
Unfortunately, we could not get information on outcomes for dialysis patients who received dental care versus those who did not receive dental care. But, to strengthen the relationship between periodontal disease and systemic inflammatory markers, we added sentences from two reference papers (ref.18 and 19) at the end of discussion section. (page 8, line 208-213)

2) Discretionary revisions: The figures and tables are too many for the amount of data presented. These should be consolidated into fewer figures and tables.

We deleted Table 3 and Figure 3.

Reviewer: Vijay Lapsia

Minor Essential revisions:

The premise of this cross sectional study is not entirely clear from the standpoint of care of the dialysis patients in North America or Europe where such collaborations (with dental facilities) are not known to exist. Adding some background info would be helpful for a reader outside Japan and Hong Kong.

In either countries, preventive dental use remains relatively low, it supposed to be lower among patients with chronic kidney disease. We added sentences in Discussion section. (page 7, line 167-170)

It is not entirely clear as to the need for such a study. References to existing understanding of the extent of the problem associated with poor dental care in dialysis patients would have helped to highlight the importance of this study.

According to the advice, we added sentences in Background section. (page 2, line 55 - page 3, line 61)

Additionally, do dialysis patients in Japan also see a primary care physician? If so does this physician play a role in the oral health care of these patients?

We think so, too. We added sentences in Discussion section. (page 7, line 173-176)

Since dialysis patients are seldom advised about oral health by dialysis providers because preventive dental care is not a primary consideration, it would have been also interesting to know what the barriers are to successfully providing preventive dental care to dialysis patients. Did the authors consider this question
when designing the survey? Could this have been included in the cross sectional survey?

I would like to thank for your valuable suggestion. I am also interested in clarifying what the barriers are to providing preventive dental care to dialysis patients. So, we added sentence in Discussion section. (page 7, line 172-173)

Please let me know of your decision at your earliest convenience. I do hope you will give us kind suggestions for the publication of this manuscript.

Sincerely yours,

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