Author's response to reviews

Title: Antibodies against phosphorylcholine are not altered in plasma of patients with Alzheimer's disease

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor,

We thank you for giving us the opportunity to clarify the ethics statement and to re-submit our manuscript “Antibodies against phosphorylcholine are not altered in plasma of patients with Alzheimer’s disease”.

Please find our clarification below.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Edina Silajdžić (on behalf of Oskar Hansson and Maria Björkqvist)
Editor’s comments

- After assessing your manuscript, we note that the controls in your study provided written informed consent, however the patients provided oral consent. Before we proceed we require you to clarify why only oral consent was obtained from these patients.

This is a procedure often used in Sweden before storing samples in biobanks. The ethical committee approved the use of the samples after we had advertised in Swedish local newspapers that the study was going to be performed using the already obtained and stored samples. The manuscript states:

“...all individuals were later on instructed to retract their permission, if they had changed their minds, as instructed in local press advertisements.”

- The patients included in your study had been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease, please confirm that your ethics committee had provided approval for the patients to provide this consent and that it was not required for consent to be obtained from next of kin.

CSF was obtained as part of clinical routine practice (as part of the routine diagnostic work-up of suspected Alzheimer’s disease). The patients approved orally that the left over CSF could be used for research and this was documented in the patient records. An advertisement was then used for giving them the possibility to retract this approval. Everything approved by the ethical committee as stated in the methods section:

The procedure for use of plasma samples obtained in clinical routine after oral consent was approved by the ethical committee (reference number "Dnr 289/2008")