Author’s response to reviews

Title: Treatment De-Escalation for HPV-Associated Oropharyngeal Squamous Cell Carcinoma with Radiotherapy vs. Trans-Oral Surgery (ORATOR2): Study Protocol for a Randomized Phase II Trial

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1. We note that some of the authors have the same initials (JWx2, AMx2). To distinguish between them in the Authors’ Contributions section please designate them as JW1, JW2, AM1, AM2 with JW1 corresponding to Jonn Wu, chosen because this name is furthest up the author list. The same reasoning
applies to Alex Mlynarek, who should be listed as AM1.

--> these changes have been made

2. Please ensure that all appendix files (1-6) are cited within the text. Any items which are not cited may be deleted by our production department upon publication.

--> References have been added to appendix 4 (pg 27), appendix 5 (pg 29), and appendix 6 (pg 31).
--> Appendix order has been updated to match order in text

3. Thank you for your efforts to address the overlap in the methods of your study. Since this study uses methodology from a previously published work, please provide a summarizing statement in the methodology together with a citation to the original paper.

--> Follow-up evaluation section (pg 21-22) and statistical analysis (pg25-26) have been summarized, reference to ORATOR protocol added

4. 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.