Author’s response to reviews

Title: Impact of Donor Graft Quality on Deep Anterior Lamellar Keratoplasty (DALK)

Authors:
Friederike Schaub (friederike.schaub@uk-koeln.de)
Philip Enders (philip.enders@uk-koeln.de)
Werner Adler (werner.adler@fau.de)
Björn Bachmann (bjoern.bachmann@uk-koeln.de)
Claus Cursiefen (claus.cursiefen@uk-koeln.de)
Ludwig Heindl (ludwig.heindl@uk-koeln.de)

Version: 2 Date: 09 Oct 2017

Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor-in-Chief, Dear Professor Clark,

Dear Professor Asbell,

Dear Sir or Madam,

Thank you very much for considering our manuscript for publication in "BMC Ophthalmology". We have thoroughly addressed all comments. Please find below our point-by-point reply.

We hope the revised manuscript is now suitable for publication in "BMC Ophthalmology" and we are looking forward to receive your final evaluation of our manuscript.

Kind regards,

Friederike Schaub (corresponding author) on behalf of all coauthors
Point-by-point reply

Editor Comments:

1. Please remove the response to reviewers from the file inventory, as it is no longer needed at this stage of the editorial process.

The response to the reviewers has been removed from the file inventory.

2. Please provide a title page according to the journal's author instructions, making sure to include all author's email addresses.

The title page has been adapted accordingly.

3. In the declarations section at the end of the manuscript, please indicate whether written informed consent was obtained from the human subjects. If written human subject consent was not necessary, please state this in the manuscript and include a brief explanation.

Subject consent was not required for this study according to national medical regulations on retrospective single center clinical studies. We added the following paragraph:

Ethics approval and consent to participate

The present retrospective, nonrandomized study was performed in adherence to the tenets of the Declaration of Helsinki and was approved by the institutional review board (Ethics Commission of the Faculty of Medicine Cologne University); IRB Number: 15-301. According to national
medical regulations on retrospective single center clinical studies Ethics Committee of the University of Cologne ruled that subject consent was not required for this study.

lines 402 ff.

4. The Availability of Data and Materials section refers to the raw data used in your study; presenting tables and figures is not sufficient to state that all data is contained within the manuscript and additional files. Please only use this statement if you have indeed provided all raw data on which your study is based. We strongly encourage all authors to share their raw data, either by providing it in a supplementary file or depositing it in a public repository and providing the details on how to access it in this section. If you do not wish to share your data, please clearly state this in this section along with a justification. For more information and a list of suitable availability statements, please see our submission guidelines: https://www.biomedcentral.com/getpublished/editorial-policies#availability+of+data+and+materials

We changed the corresponding section to:

Availability of data and material

The datasets generated and/or analysed during the current study are not publicly available since all relevant data are included in the manuscript. The datasets are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

lines 412 ff.

5. Please include the sentence "All authors have read and approved the final version of this manuscript" in the Author contributions section and ensure that this is the case.

Authors´ contributions

Conception and design: FS, LMH.
Data collection, evaluation and analyses: FS, PE, WA, BOB, CC, LMH.

Preparation, review and approval of the manuscript: FS, PE, WA, BOB, CC, LMH.

All authors have read and approved the final version of this manuscript.

lines 424 ff.

6. 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 and figures should also be clean versions.

The final manuscript has been uploaded as a clean version.

7. Please rewrite the second sentence of the second paragraph of the background section (beginning with "Traditionally, penetrating keratoplasty..."), the entire fourth paragraph of the background section (beginning with "Although there have been many published comparative..."), and the first sentence of the fifth paragraph of the background section (beginning with "As most patients with progressive..."); these sections of your manuscript overlap with text in other, published, papers.

These paragraphs have been rephrased:

I.

Traditionally, penetrating keratoplasty (PK) as full-thickness replacement of the cornea has been the standard technique for corneal transplantation in advanced stages of keratoconus, anterior stromal opacity or endothelial failure. Consequently, donor tissue had to be clear without stromal haze, epithelial or endothelial pathologies [1-3].

lines 57 ff.
II.
Comparative analyses between DALK and PK for keratoconus report varying results. Graft survival and outcome seem to be affected by several factors, including host and donor factors, improvement in surgical technique, and possibly surgeons experience and learning curve [6,8,9].

lines 67 ff.

III.
Most patients with keratoconus are young and therefore have a higher demand on their visual function.

lines 71 ff.