Author’s response to reviews

Title: Does rituximab improve clinical outcomes of patients with thyroid-associated ophthalmopathy? A systematic review and meta-analysis

Authors:

Changjun Wang (wangchangjun@zju.edu.cn)
Qingyao Ning (nqy0203@hotmail.com)
Kai Jin (kingjinkai@126.com)
Jiajun Xie (dafanshu222@126.com)
Juan Ye (yejuanzju@163.com)

Version: 3 Date: 04 Jan 2018

Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Roberta Scherer:

We appreciated for your and the reviewers’ helpful and valuable comments concerning our manuscript (BOPH-D-17-00470R2). We have made corrections according to the reviewer’s comments. We believe that the quality of the revised manuscript has been improved based on reviewers’ comments. Our detailed point-by-point responses to the reviewer’s comments are as following:

1. It is important that you understand that GRADE is not used to assess 'quality' but rather is used to assess the amount of confidence you have in your results. Quality is one aspect of the GRADE assessment and so a group of studies contributing to a meta-analysis may be down-graded if the majority of studies are of low quality. However that same group of studies may also be downgraded is there is inconsistency (not a 'quality' measure, but a measure of how close the results are between different studies) or publication bias (again, not a quality measure of the studies themselves, but of the group of studies). You assessed the quality of the studies using NOS or Cochrane risk of bias, but then used this assessment of quality as one component of the GRADE assessment.
So, please change the sentence in the abstract to "In addition, the quality and each study was assessed using either the Newcastle Ottawa Scale or the Cochrane Risk of Bias tool, and reliability of the meta-analytic result using GRADE."

Response: Thanks for this suggestion. We have changed the sentence in the abstract to "In addition, the quality and each study was assessed using either the Newcastle Ottawa Scale (NOS) or the Cochrane Risk of Bias tool, and reliability of the meta-analytic result using the Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation (GRADE)." Please see them in the Abstract Part of the revised manuscript.

2. Also change the sentence in the abstract to "All included studies were classified as good quality."

Response: We appreciate your suggestion. We have changed the sentence in the abstract to "All included studies were classified as good quality." Please see them in the Abstract Part of the revised manuscript.

3. For the methods and results where you say quality was assessed by GRADE, please update the text to show that QUALITY was assessed using the NOS and Cochrane and RELIABILITY OF RESULTS using GRADE. It's an important difference.

Response: Thanks for this suggestion. We have changed the sentence in the methods to “Quality was assessed using the NOS and Cochrane and reliability of results using GRADE by Changjun Wang and Kai Jin.” and updated the sentence in the results to “Methodological quality in included studies were acceptable by Newcastle-Ottawa Scale and Cochrane risk of bias tool, in which main drawbacks were the application of few blinding and random distribution, and insufficient sample size, which were reliable appraised through GRADE.” Please see them in the Methods and Results Part of the revised manuscript.

4. Table S1 - Cohort is still misspelled as corhort

Response: Thanks for this suggestion. We have corrected the spelling Cohort in Table S1.
5. Table S2 - add a legend to show that the star indicates a score of 1

Response: Thanks for this suggestion. We have added a legend to show that the star indicates a score of 1 in Table S2.