Author’s response to reviews

Title: Is vitamin C enough? A case of scurvy in a five-year-old girl and review of the literature

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To address the technical comments, the subtitle, Background, was added. We have already received written consent was obtained from the child’s mother.

Reviewer 1 requested more information about the family background, birth history, psychomotor development, and home environment. This was added, starting page 4, line 89.

Reviewer 1 also asked about growth velocity. We added a figure displaying the child’s BMI which shows the growth velocity. We stated the number of foods added to the child’s diet and specifically mentioned the child ate foods from all food groups. It is not possible to attribute weight gain to specific foods as suggested.

We address each of the minor comments from Reviewer 1.

The reviewer asked why we did not conduct additional testing for nutritional deficiencies. We did not realize the child’s pediatrician had ordered testing when the vitamin C deficiency was discovered. In responding to the reviewer, found laboratory results we had not previously seen. These results were reported.

That said, we do typically start children at risk of nutritional deficiency on a multivitamin without conducting all of the laboratory testing because regardless of whether the child is currently identified with a deficiency as the child will still be at risk of the deficiency until the diet improves.

The reviewer asked about medium and long term prognosis. We had previously reported her outcome at six months. We were able to add one year follow-up.

Reviewer 1 identified three minor changes in wording. All of these were corrected.
Reviewer 2 requested we follow the case report guidelines. While we did follow the general structure of a case report, we also added an extensive literature review. One goal of the manuscript was to demonstrate this case was atypical when compared to other children identified with scurvy. We believe the incorporation of the literature review strengthens the paper. While other researchers have conducted reviews of the clinical cases of scurvy, none have examined the information reviewed by this manuscript. We examined the literature from the perspective of the children’s eating problems. We also believe the review of literature should be kept in order to present this information to readers.

While we had IRB approval, we also obtained parental permission.

The reviewer suggested adding a discussion. We have a discussion section at the end of the manuscript.

There was a grammatical error in the Abstract identified by Reviewer 2, this was corrected.

In the background, Reviewer 2 suggested adding the gender of the participants in one study. While we did not include the gender of the participants in each study reviewed, we did include the gender, as well as other demographics, for all of the participants in the studies included in the literature review.

Finally, reviewer 2 asked about the standard of care for the treatment of scurvy. To date, the treatment for scurvy is the administration of vitamin C. A major goal of this paper is to discuss the limitations of treating vitamin deficiencies resulting from selective eating by only the administration of vitamins and failing to address the limited diet.

I appreciate the comments of the reviewers. I think their input has improved the manuscript.

Keith Williams