Author's response to reviews

Title: Prevention of exacerbations in patients with COPD and vitamin D deficiency through vitamin D supplementation (PRECOVID): a study protocol

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Amsterdam, May 4, 2015

Dear Editor,

Hereby I would like to submit our manuscript entitled ‘PREvention of exacerbations in patients with COPD and vitamin D deficiency through Vitamin D supplementation (PRECOVID): a study protocol’ for publication as a study protocol in BMC Pulmonary Medicine.

Vitamin D is increasingly studied for its potential immunomodulatory properties. As vitamin D deficiency is a common problem in patients with COPD, this has given rise to the hypothesis that vitamin D supplementation might have beneficial effects in these patients. Previous studies have not demonstrated a beneficial effect of vitamin D on exacerbation rate in COPD patients. However, posthoc subgroup analyses suggested protective effects in vitamin D deficient patients. In our manuscript we describe our study protocol to assess the effect of vitamin D supplementation on exacerbation rate specifically in vitamin D deficient COPD patients. To our knowledge this is the first trial that will be performed in vitamin D deficient patients specifically. Also, we will use a more frequent dosing regimen in contrast to other studies and assess potential underlying immune response mechanisms in more detail. Finally we will also assess the effects of vitamin D on physical performance.

We hope you will consider our manuscript for publication in BMC Pulmonary Medicine.

On behalf of all authors,

Thanking you in advance,

Yours sincerely,

Rachida Rafiq, MD