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, July 28, 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.

Our study is approved by the local ethics committee. The study is funded by the Lung Foundation Netherlands and has undergone peer review. Copies of the ethical and funding approvals are sent as attachments to BMCSeriesEditorial@biomedcentral.com. The study has recently started with inclusion of participants. No publications containing results of the study have been published.

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