Author’s response to reviews

Title: Comparison of The French and CARDS Classifications for Lumbar Degenerative Spondylolisthesis: Reliability and Validity

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Version: 2 Date: 11 Jul 2019

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Dear editor and reviewers,

Thank you very much for your questions and comments. The questions are responded as following:

Editor comments:

1. We note that your images appear to still have patient names on them, please modify them so that they do not contain names.

Thank you very much for your suggestion. We have modified all figures.

Reviewer comment:

1. Thank you very much for your suggestion. The minimum clinically important difference (MCID) represents the smallest improvement considered worthwhile by a patient, which means clinically significant rather than statistically significant. The most commonly used method to determine MCID is anchor-based approaches. Anchor-based approaches compare the change in patient reported outcome score to some other measure of change, considered an anchor or external criterion. In the anchor-based approaches, a subjective assessment as “better”, “unchanged” or “worse” is needed to be used as an external criterion. Very few studies have relied on an objective external criterion. In this study,
however, only patient reported outcomes as VAS, ODI, and SF 36 were included and there was no external criterion used as anchor. As you mentioned, the use of MCID will be better than statistical significance in this study. Because of the lack of proper anchor, we were unable to get a reliable MCID. However, we find your suggestion very helpful in our future work and thank you again for your valuable suggestion.

Thank you again for your time and patience!

Lu Shibao