Author’s response to reviews

Title: Clinical utility of computed tomography Hounsfield characterization for percutaneous nephrolithotomy: a cross-sectional study

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Dear Editor,

please find enclosed the manuscript titled “Clinical utility of computed tomography Hounsfield characterization for percutaneous nephrolithotomy: a cross-sectional study” to be considered for publication after revision in the Research Article section of BMC Urology.

On behalf of all Authors I would like to thank you for such possibility and to thank the Reviewers for the comments to the article.

- Yigit Akin: "The methodology is adequate but the numbers of your patients in the groups are not appropriate for statistical analyses. The relationship between HU of the stone and successful operation & suggestion affect operation had been published times and times. There is no new in the manuscript".
I completely agree that the numbers of the patients in this study is relatively low, as it is underlined at the end of the discussion. However, the numbers were sufficient to provide significant results which may be a consequence of the accuracy of the parameters studied to differentiate stone composition. In any case these numbers reflect the prevalence of different stone types in Italy and the studies previously proposed in this field analyzed a comparable number of patients.

The relationship between HU of the stone and successful operation was previously stated but the only study which evaluated it for PCNL proposed as HU parameter HUM with an accuracy far worse than HUD (AUC 0.299 vs 0.66). The originality of the paper is provided by the flow-chart created to determine stone composition mainly using HU parameters and the power of the above-mentioned HUD to assess the risk of residual fragments after PCNL.

English editing has been performed to improve language quality.

- Christopher Netsch: all legends were added to the tables and figures.