Author’s response to reviews

Title: Design and baseline data in the BAriatic surgery SUbstitution and Nutrition study (BASUN): A 10 year prospective cohort study

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor,

Thank you for your time on reviewing our paper and we submit a revised version.

We will answer each comment made by the editor and the reviewers in the following text. We have marked the changes in our text in the attached document so that they are easy to track.

We hope that these revisions to our paper are satisfactory.

Best regards,
Gudrun Höskuldsdottir, MD
Corresponding author.

Comments made by the editor and the reviewers
In the introduction section there needs to be a more clear research question and also hypotheses.

Response
Thank you for this comment. We have added a more detailed description of the primary focus of the study. It is, however, not a hypothesis-driven study but we have rephrased.

Tables 1, 2 and 3 should be submitted as supplements.

Response
The tables have been moved to the supplements section.

In the methods there must a clear and precise explanation why all the questionnaires are used.

Response
Thank you. After adding the text to make our focus areas clearer we have divided the section that describes the questionnaires into subsections to clarify which questionnaires are used to gather information for each focus area.

Taking 1,2,3 into account, try to write a more concise results section.

Response
Thank you. We have now edited the results section to make it more concise and readable.

In the discussion section pivotal studies need to mentioned (the works of dr EO Aarts on multivitamin research, and also the SOS study).

Response
We have now added the results of these studies in our discussion section. Thank you for this comment.

Comments from reviewer 1:

Authors could add more accurate study design and analytical methodology for assessing data.

Response
We have taken this comment into consideration and made appropriate changes to the methods section. We have also added text describing the analysis that we plan to perform after follow-up periods.

The results are not appropriately discussed.

Response
Thank you. As this paper only describes the population of the study at baseline the analyses performed so far are only descriptive. But we have revised the discussion and added sections regarding the similarities and differences between the three study groups as well as addressed possible explanations for these differences in the discussion section.

I recommend to rewrite discussion section.
Response
We have edited the discussion section quite a bit to make it more concise and easier to read.

Authors should proofread this manuscript from some professional.

Response
See comment below.

Comments from reviewer 2:

All baseline characteristics have to be presented, including data from the questionnaires. If it was planned and perhaps already it was done, then the whole collected information has to be presented.

Response
Thank you. We have now added text to underline the fact that this paper is only presented to describe the methodology of this prospective study and the baseline characteristics of the individuals included. This was probably not clear enough in the first version of the manuscript. We think the manuscript would be overloaded with information if all collected information were to be presented, and, furthermore, would have to replicated in future studies when presenting the results after follow-up. This in turn would make hard to report the results of the study. We hope the reviewer finds it acceptable with revisions made.

A real picture of the medical treatment has to be also presented. How many patients received a specific group of medications.

Response
Thanks. In line with the previous comment and response we have chosen to group the medical treatments at baseline and look forward to future analyses on the possible roles of pharmacological treatments.

Xenical is a brand name. Please write the INN.

Response
Of course. This has been edited in the text.

Tables 1, 2 and 3 better to be placed in a Supplement. In the article only results have to be given. Table 4 - please add a column with the p-values. Why they are given separately, in the text?

Response
Thank you. We have now moved the p-values from the text and placed them in a separate column in the table.

Discussion has to be more focused and related with the findings of the basal characteristics of the patients.

Response
Thanks. As previously responded, we have revised the discussion and hope the reviewer think it has improved. This study is the largest prospective study that compares the effects and consequences of not
only two commonly used surgical methods used to treat obesity, but also use non-surgical treatment as a reference and comparator. Because of this scope of the study we think that a manuscript focusing on the methodology and baseline characteristics is warranted, but look forward to reporting follow-up data will hopefully happen relatively soon.