Author’s response to reviews

Title: „Song of Life (SOL)” study protocol: A multicenter, randomized trial on the emotional, spiritual, and psychobiological effects of music therapy in palliative care

Authors:

Marco Warth (marco.warth@med.uni-heidelberg.de)
Friederike Koehler (friederike.koehler@med.uni-heidelberg.de)
Martin Weber (martin.weber@unimedizin-mainz.de)
Hubert Bardenheuer (hubert.bardenheuer@med.uni-heidelberg.de)
Beate Ditzen (beate.ditzen@med.uni-heidelberg.de)
Jens Kessler (jens.kessler@med.uni-heidelberg.de)

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Dr. Zalm,

Thank you very much for assessing our manuscript and for considering it for publication. Please find below a point-to-point response to your queries:

1. Ethics approval

During our assessment of your ethics approval documentation provided by the Landesarztkammer Rheinland-Pfalz, several recommendations were made to improve the quality of your study. The suggested improvements relate to your sample size calculation and more information regarding consent and the use of clinical data. When we assessed your manuscript we noticed that both sample size calculations and the mentioned ethics information was included in your manuscript already. Can you please clarify if you have changed your manuscript since you have obtained your ethics approval, and if so, can you clearly state the changes you have implemented following obtaining ethics approval.

-->There have been no changes to the manuscript after we received the ethical approval. In response to the latest approval, we consulted the biostatistical department of our University and received a confirmation on the appropriateness of our initial sample size calculations.
2. Methodology change

You have indicated in previous communications that you have reduced the saliva collection samples from 5 samples to 3 samples. Please change your manuscript accordingly. In addition, please clarify whether this change was approved by your funding body.

-->The manuscript has been revised accordingly, particularly Figure 2 and the paragraph “Exploratory analysis”. I confirm that our funding bodies approved this reduction of saliva samples.

3. Ethics approval and consent to participate Please also include details of the ethics approval obtained from Landesarzekammer Rheinland-Pfalz.

-->This information has been added to the paragraph.

We are looking forward to receiving your decision.

Sincerely,

Marco Warth