Author’s response to reviews

Title: Consensus on treatment for residents in long-term care facilities: perspectives from relatives and care staff in the PACE cross-sectional study in 6 European countries.

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Author’s response to reviews:

Response to the reviewers

Dear editor,

We have included a clean version of our manuscript, in which we have addressed the issues raised by reviewer #3. We have also included a list of abbreviations in the manuscript.
Yours sincerely,

Maud ten Koppel, on behalf of, Roeline Pasman, Jenny van der Steen, Hein van Hout, Marika Kylänen, Lieve Van den Block, Tinne Smets, Luc Deliens, Giovanni Gambassi, Katherine Froggatt, Katarzyna Szczerbińska and Bregje Onwuteaka-Philipsen.

Reviewer 3

Comment 1

Comment: The consensus questions for relatives and care staff are rather different. In particular, the care staff question has a specific reference to a time frame -- i.e., "care and treatment in the last month of the resident's life" -- which is not in the question for relatives. The authors need to discuss how the wording difference may have affected the study findings.

Reply: We agree with the reviewer that the difference in wording needs to be reflected on. We have added this to the discussion section.

Action taken:

Additionally, it should be noted that the question for care staff included reference to a specific time frame, ‘the last month of life’, which was not included in the question for relatives. It is possible that relatives considered decisions that had been made much earlier, possibly when the resident had only been living in the care facility for a little while. At that time relatives and residents were probably still getting used to the new status quo and perhaps were not yet fully informed about options for treatment and care, which could have resulted in a lack of consensus. While during the last month of life, most residents had been living in the care facility for quite some time. Thus everyone involved had had time to adjust to the situation and to be informed about possible options, which could have resulted in full consensus in more cases. Therefore the possible difference in time frame could also have contributed to the differences in consensus as indicated by relatives and care staff. (Page 16, line 325-336)

Comment 2

Comment: Lines 198-200: The sentence is unclear. How could there be consensus according to relatives and "resident"? Residents were deceased and couldn't be surveyed.

Reply: In this sentence we mean to say that associations were assessed between consensus according to relatives and characteristics of residents, relatives and care facilities. We understand that the way it is phrased now, can be confusing. We have restructured this sentence.

Action taken:

Associations between full consensus according to relatives and characteristics of residents, relatives and care facilities were assessed and associations between full consensus according to care staff and characteristics of residents and care facilities were assessed. (Page 9, line 198-200)

Comment 3

Comment: The word, univariable, that appears in lines 200, 262, 278 and in Tables 2 and 3 should be bivariable.

Reply: We argue that the term ‘univariable’ is better fitting to describe a regression analysis in which
the relation between one independent variable and an outcome variable is assessed. Though the terms univariate/univariable/bivariate/bivariable are inconsistently used to describe such analyses, cases have been made that ‘univariable’ is the best fitting term (1-3). Therefore we make a case to use ‘univariable’ and not change it into ‘bivariable’.