Author’s response to reviews

Title: The effects of add-on self-care education on quality of life and fatigue in gastrointestinal cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy

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Reviewer reports:

Amal Akour (Reviewer 1):

This is a very interesting topic. The paper is well written and to-the-point. I have minor comments:

Abstract: please start your methods my Ninety one (Instead of 91)

Response: We have changed the requested text.

Page 5, Line 15: Please provide in more details who did the education and how did you ensure that consistent education was received by all patients in the intervention group.

Response: We appreciate the reviewer’s kind suggestion and details were provided in page 5 line 24~25 accordingly.

Page 6, Line 3: Please provide the reference for your suggested diet.

Response: The reference regarding the diet suggestion was cited in page 6 line 8.
Page 6, line 46: what equation or statistical analysis was used to calculate the sample size? was it done based on results from previous study? if yes please indicate that and add the reference.

Response: The method to calculate sample size was referred to previous study, which was cited in page 7 line 13.

Page 11, line 12: Please keep the limitation in the discussion section, add also the strengths and significance of your study. In addition, can you elaborate on the confounding factors mentioned in the conclusion, what are they exactly, what type of bias they could have introduced to the current study, how did authors account of them or how are they going to account for them in future?

Response: We appreciate the reviewer’s constructive suggestion and re-organized the discussion section as requested in page 11 line 10-18.

Johanna Hok Nordberg (Reviewer 2):

Thank you for your revised manuscript!

I think you have addressed many of the comments in a sufficient and good manner, especially in the background and method section. Regarding the title I welcome your revision although I think the specification a "self-care program" or your initial suggestion "self-care education" was better than the current term "self-care education". Whatever you choose in your final version, make sure to be consequent throughout the paper; right now you use both terms self-care education and self-care therapy (only in the title).

Response: We agree with reviewer and the title has been updated accordingly.

I think most of the material in the paper is now of sufficient quality while I still have some major concerns regarding some parts in the background, discussion and conclusion (primarily I think this has to do with language), please see more details below.

Page 4, row 22-31. I can still not understand what you mean with "in the absence of medical institute":

"the self-care theory proposed by Dorothea Orem highlights the availability and accessibility of health care to reduce side effects of chemotherapy in the absence of medical institute (11)"

Response: We apologize for any confusion caused by language, and the expression has been modified as “outside any medical institution”.
"The patients practiced distraction stayed calm, positive and improved physical function especially immunity system response."

I think there should be a "who" inserted after "the patients"? Did you check immunity system response? Maybe I missed this information but if not, please clarify or revise.

Response: We appreciate the reviewer’s suggestion and the sentence has been corrected as suggested. We are sorry for the over-interpretation regarding the benefits of distraction course and statement about immunity system response has been omitted accordingly.

Page 12, row 1-7

Please check language, it is difficult to understand what you want to say here.

Response: We have modified the expression to be more explicit accordingly.

Page 12, row 12-29. This is a good consideration of the limitations of the study. I think this section would be better suited in the discussion instead of in the conclusion.

Response: We agree with reviewer and this part has been moved to discussion in page 11 line 11–18.