Author’s response to reviews

Title: Legal medicine implications in fibrinolytic therapy of acute ischemic stroke

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Subject: Your Submission METH-D-19-00031R2
Ms. Ref. No.: METH-D-19-00031R2
Title: Legal medicine implications in fibrinolytic therapy of acute ischemic stroke
Journal: BMC Medical Ethics

Dear Ana Donnelly

On behalf of

Liam Messin
Dear Lingling Tian

We are very thankful to the Editor and to both Reviewers for their notes; we have carefully read the comments and have revised / completed the manuscript accordingly. Our responses are given in a point-by-point manner below, as well all the changes and completions to the manuscript are highlighted in red and our comments for the editor in blue.

Technical Comments:

1. Please include the email addresses for all authors on the title page. The corresponding author should still be indicated.

Done.

2. Please rename the section "Introduction" to "Background".

Done.

3. Please format the main text body according to our submission guidelines for Debate Articles (https://bmcmedethics.biomedcentral.com/submission-guidelines/preparing-your-manuscript/debate). The sections "Results" and "Discussion" should be under the heading "Main text".

We made the changes in Manuscript as requested.

4. If identifying images or other personal or clinical details of participants are presented that compromise anonymity, a statement of consent to publish from the patient should be included. This section must be included even if it is not applicable to your manuscript. If consent to publish is not applicable to your manuscript please write ‘Not Applicable’ in this section.

Please check the manuscript, L521. Consent to publish
Responses to Reviewers

N. V. Todd (Reviewer 1)

This is a better paper now it has been revised. I am happy to recommend publication as it is but the authors may wish to amplify one point in relation to cases 3 and 4. In both of those cases the patient's neurological problems meant they were not legally competent to give (or refuse) consent to thrombolysis. At lines 382-390 and 392-397 the authors set out the conflict of (i) the need for consent in most cases and (ii) emergency surgery that does not require consent. I suggest that they apply this specifically to cases 3 and 4. The many RCTs say that these patients would have benefitted from thrombolysis yet it was not given because of objections from the family. The doctors' duty of care was to the patient, not the family, and in my opinion they should both have been treated. If a 3 year old child required emergency blood transfusion to save their life the mother, who was a Jehovah's witness, cannot prevent transfusion of her child because of her religious beliefs. I accept this is difficult.

Thank you for the kind appreciation. We hope that we understood correctly the reviewer’s suggestion and we added the following paragraph:

In the particular cases presented (3 and 4), the doctors decided to strictly follow the rtPA specific protocol, and not the emergency exceptions provided by the law or the direct benefit of the patient. Another type of physician’s approach to the exceptions provided by the law would have led to the administration of rtPA, including these two cases. It is more than obvious that a congruence or agreement between the law and the protocol would make it easier for the doctor to decide from both therapeutic and ethical points of view.

Paolo Fais (Reviewer 2)

According to the instructions for authors the debate paper should include these sections: Abstract, Keywords, Background, Main text, Conclusions, List of abbreviations.

I can't find the "Background", "Main text", and "Conclusions" paragraphs. Please rename paragraphs, according to the instructions for authors https://bmcmedethics.biomedcentral.com/submission-guidelines/preparing-your-manuscript/debate

We made changes in Manuscript as requested.

Line 131-132 I can't understand what the author means with the phrase "the doctors being afraid of bleeding complications" following the sentence "prior to the occurrence of this therapy,
aspects of legal medicine involved in this field of medical expertise have already been reported”. I can't understand the logical frame of this sentence.

Thank you for your observation. We apologize for erroneous expression. We have deleted the part of sentence "the doctors being afraid of bleeding complications”.

Line 209 tpw error "On his behalf, the neurologist 209 explained the reasons his his refusal"

Thank you. Sorry for mistake. We have corrected.

Line 489 "have the moral responsibility to deal with patients' refusal and try to correct the”. Although it is also my personal point of view, I think "correct" is too strong… maybe would be better to "discuss"….

Thank you for suggestion. We have modified accordingly.

Please revise the English, I'm not an English speaker but the paper seems scattered from convoluted expressions. For example…Line 183-3 "CT and laboratory analyses couldn't exclude the patient from rtPA administration" should be "CT and laboratory analyses allow the patient to rtPA administration"

Sorry for mistakes. Thank you, we made the correction accordingly. English was revised.