Author’s response to reviews

Title: Factors influencing the length of hospital stay of patients with Anorexia nervosa - Results of a prospective multi-center study

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Dr. Lanham,

We would like to thank you and the reviewer for the constructive comments on our manuscript (Ms. No. BHSR-D-17-01274). All of the authors greatly appreciate the opportunity to revise the manuscript.

We hope we addressed all comments carefully. A detailed response to the comments can be found below and all changes to the manuscript are marked.

We hope that the revised version meets your approval and that the manuscript is now acceptable for publication.

Sincerely,

Denise Kästner
Detailed response to the comments

We would like to thank the reviewer very much for the constructive comments on our manuscripts. We hope we have addressed all comments carefully.

Øyvind Rø˚ (Reviewer): Review of revised manuscript. Factors influencing the length of hospital stay of patients with Anorexia nervosa - Results of a prospective multi-center study.

The authors have responded on most of my comments in a satisfactory way. They have still included the about 25 predictors in a sample of 135 participants and have not given a plausible argument for doing so. To write that replication is importance is not a valid argument of including so many predictors.

• We thank you for your comment. We believe, that it is important to consider that Anorexia nervosa is a comparably low prevalent disorder. Therefore, the presently recruited sample size can be viewed as one of the strength of the study and the recruitment of considerably more patients seemed not realistic. Furthermore, the existing evidence base on the topic does not justify a stringent theoretical selection of predictor variables (inconsistent findings with respect to some predictors: e.g. age; lacking evidence with respect to others: e.g. EDI-2 variables). Consequently, we had to decide on ignoring potentially relevant variables or on applying a variable selection procedure. A disadvantage of these procedures is that it can cause instable models (Steketee & Chambless, 1992). The comparison of the present results with existing and future findings can help to solve this problem to a degree. We extended our discussion of this topic within the limitation section (p. 13).

In the paper there is no information if patients in the three different treatment centers are similar or not.

• We thank you for raising this important point. Now, we conducted ANOVAs to investigate potential baseline differences in age or BMI. We report the results in the section
‘sample characteristics’ (p.9). They show no significant differences with respect to sociodemographic characteristics or baseline BMI.

In the regression model treatment centers showed to be the second most important predictor. This finding is under communicated in the abstract and the conclusions. This could reflect that different policies about when to discharge patients between centers are important factors when predicting length of hospital stay of patients with anorexia nervosa.

• We extended the discussion on this finding in the abstract and the conclusion (s. p. 2 and p. 14). We believe that it is important to discuss the standards in determining the treatment duration and to further explore potential geographical variations.