Author’s response to reviews

Title: Identifying Older Adults at Risk of Harm Following Elective Surgery: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis

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Dr. Diana Samuel
Assistant Editor, BMC Medicine

RE: BMED-D-17-00926R1

Dear Dr. Samuel,

Thank you for your email dated October 24th and the enclosed peer review comments. We have written formal responses to the two comments posed by our reviewer and revised our manuscript accordingly. We have also removed Douglas Sinclair’s initials from the list of author contributions.

We look forward to receiving further communication from BMC Medicine with regards to our manuscript.

Sincerely,

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Reviewer Comments:

Reviewer #2: Thank you for the changes that have led to an improved manuscript. I have two remaining comments:

1. Comment: The Conclusion in the Abstract still seems rather positive, and I think it should be more in line with the conclusion in the actual full body of the manuscript which has been revised to be more cautious.

Response: We have changed the wording of the conclusion so that its tone is less instructive and instead more prudent.

Quotation from Manuscript:

Lines 62-65 -

“We identified potentially modifiable prognostic factors (e.g. frailty, depressive symptoms and smoking) associated with developing postoperative complications that can be targeted preoperatively to optimize care.”

2. Comment: I am puzzled by the response that it was not possible to use CHARMS and TRIPOD quality assessment. The date of publication of CHARMS was Oct 2014 and TRIPOD was Jan 2015. This systematic review has literature search dates that run up to April 2016, and so both CHARMS and TRIPOD were available long before the literature search was even completed, let alone the data extraction and assessment of study quality.

Response: This systematic review was initiated in 2011 prior to the advent of CHARMS and TRIPOD.