Author’s response to reviews

Title: Efficacy of N,N'bis-(2-mercaptoethyl)isophthalamide on mercury intoxication: A randomized controlled trial

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear reviewers and editors,

thank you very much for your effort, time and help to improve this manuscript. All you remarks are very valuable and helpful.

Editor's comments:

I added a sentence in the background section and added a section in the discussion about the design as a field study and not a hospital study. A hospitalization of the participants would of course be the optimal way to assess the efficacy. However, as resources are limited and the next study phase will be significantly larger it is simply not feasible.

Reviewer #1:

"Minor revision: on page 10 line 200-201 and line 210-212 you are repeating the same information."
I deleted the sentence in line 200.

"Major revision:

The conclusion of a successful test is not correct in my opinion, if you wanted to look at the ability of NBMI to lower the body burden of mercury. Please revise this conclusion that seems still to be too optimistic regarding the ability of NBMI to lower the body burden of mercury."

The conclusion in the abstract was changed accordingly and there is an addition to the conclusion.

Reviewer #2:

"I do not understand the chapter "Change of mercury levels" (lines 565ff). What are the numbers in Table 5? It is incomprehensible to me."

The change of mercury levels is calculated as the difference of the values on day 15/day 45 and the baseline value for every individual. Those difference values therefore make up a new variable, for which the difference between groups is statistically tested.

The medians presented in table 5 are assessed from the mentioned difference resp. change values. Those do not and cannot equal the difference of the median values presented in table 2 as they describe something different. The reason for this distinction is, that you don't want to assess the effect on a population as in a public health intervention, but the effect of an individual treatment.

I hope this clarifies the matter a bit.

"Beyond this, the style of Table 5 is different to the style of Table 2."

I changed the style of table 5 to be more consistant with the other tables.
"Lines 569-571: I do not understand the sentence. Missing word."

I corrected and rephrased the sentence.

Thank you for valuable comments improving this manuscript and my skills.

I wish you a happy and joyous year 2018!

Sincerely,

Paul Schutzmeier