Author’s response to reviews

Title: Mandibular growth in infants with Robin sequence treated with the Tübingen palatal plate

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Version: 2 Date: 12 Apr 2019

Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor, dear Reviewers,

Thank you for reviewing our manuscript entitled “Mandibular growth in infants with Robin sequence treated with the Tübingen palatal plate” (ID: HAFM-D-18-00110R1). We found your comments extremely helpful for improving our paper. We have studied your comments carefully and have tried to make appropriate changes that we hope will meet your approval. The changes in the revised manuscript are marked in yellow. The responses to the reviewers’ comments are provided below.

We would like to express our great appreciation to you and your reviewers for their work on our paper. If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards,

Prof. C.F. Poets
Response to reviewers’ comments:

Reviewer #1: A very nicely written and interesting paper on the management of the airway and mandibular growth in RS patients. Language review - excellent

Response:

We are very grateful for your review and your kind comments.

Reviewer #2: Thank you for this interesting paper. I think it is worthy of publication with minor revisions. It tries to discuss the question of catch up mandibular growth in the PRS patient which is controversial.

I think overall it is a good paper, although retrospective in nature, and with limited patient numbers, it is interesting. I think some photos of the Tubingen palatal plate are worthwhile for those considering implementing this technique for their patients.

Response:

We considered adding a figure to illustrate the Tuebingen Palatal Plate, but decided against it because such an illustration is included in another recent paper from our group. We now refer to this reference instead (Ref. 20; page 4, para 2). However, if the editors insist, we offer to obtain permission to reproduce this figure and add it to the present manuscript.

Reviewer #2:

I appreciate that most patients had a favourable outcome, it is hard to know if the improvement is time dependent or plate dependent, ie did they just have catch up growth, or did the plate contribute to encouraging mandibular growth? I think this is worthy of discussion in the end of the discussion section.

We agree that this important question is difficult to address given an uncontrolled study design.

Response:

We have discussed this aspect in more detail in our Discussion section (page 13-14).

Reviewer #2:

Also, the conclusion on the manuscript is shorter than the conclusion on the abstract, which does not make sense to me. The conclusion in the manuscript does not mention the Tubingen plate, so
I think the conclusion needs to be expanded appropriately. It should mention the findings in relation to the maxillary/mandibular ratio vs jaw index, and it should mention the role of the plate in encouraging mandibular growth.

Response:

We have clarified and extended the conclusion of our manuscript (page 13-14).

Reviewer #3: The authors report their retrospective analysis in medical treatment of Pierre Robin Sequence (PRS) using a non invasive treatment. However the treatment of PRS is still controversial and the authors focused the discussion only in their treatment result. I agree that sleep studies is the best way to asses the severity of the disease but the authors lack to refers to recent bibliography (MJS Van Lieshouta Robin sequence: A European survey on current practice patterns. doi:10.1016/j.jcms.2015.07.008; Bütow KW: Pierre Robin sequence: Subdivision, data, theories, and treatment - Part 4: Recommended management and treatment of Pierre Robin sequence and its application. doi: 10.4103/2231-0746.186136).

Response:

We have inserted these interesting studies and results in the Background section (Page 3-4).

Reviewer #3:

Table 1 present some data repeated in double.

Response:

We have changed the table and removed the duplicate data.

Reviewer #3:

The Tuebingen palatal plate should be shows in a figure for a better comprehension by the readers.

Response:

We have included a reference to a recent study from our group published in an open access journal to that the interested reader can get a visual impression without any hassle. However, if the editor insists, we can obtain permission from the published to reproduce this figure.
Reviewer #3: The case series include a patient submitted to tracheostomy and three submitted to conventional palatal plate that seems a different management to Tuebingen palatal plate that was used in the other patients. The second paragraph of the result is unclear about the number of participant and the exclusion criteria.

Why the authors include these patient with different treatment ?. I suggest to refers to a homogeneous treatment group. The discussion should focus also with the result obtained in other series with different medical treatment and a table of comparison should be insert.

Response:

Thank you! We have changed the presentation in our Results section (Page 8). All children in whom we collected Jaw Index data at the 3-month follow-up group (n=20) were treated with the TPP and we have added this information as a note to tables 1,3 and 4. Unfortunately, we do not have Jaw index data on patients treated by tracheostomy or conventional palatal plates, since we were mainly interested in the development of the jaw with TPP treatment.