Author’s response to reviews

Title: 'Fast Cast' and 'Needle Tenotomy' protocols with the Ponseti method to improve clubfoot management in Bangladesh.

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Author’s response to reviews:

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The Editor - JFAR

Dear Dr Borthwick,

Re: 'Fast Cast' and 'Needle Tenotomy' protocols with the Ponseti method to improve clubfoot management in Bangladesh (JFAR-D-17-00077)

Thank you for your provisional acceptance of our paper, and the authorship team wish to extend our thanks to both reviewers for their helpful suggestions and specific amendment request. In the following point-by-point response, all review items have been addressed.

Within the amended manuscript, responses to Reviewer 1 are made in orange text, and to Reviewer 2's points in green text.
Reviewer #1:

Page 3 Lines 4850

Could the authors provide a reference for the statement made "it has been repeatedly shown….."

Thank you. References 5-9 are cited at end of 1st para (Background)

Page 4 Lines 12

Could the authors provide references for the "level 4 evidence….."

Thank you. References 16-18 are cited (page 4), and this paragraph has been condensed to associate related sentences

Page 4 Lines 3638

Could the authors add a reference for the statement made in terms of "…….found to reduce bleeding"

Thank you. References 17-18 are now cited (page 4), as suggested.

Page 5 Lines 3641

Could the authors comment whether any analysis was carried out using the collated proxy indicators of affluence. There seems to be no reference made in terms of this in the discussion.

Thank you. Within the Results section, the proxy measures of affluence appear as a simple count. However, at your suggestion, we have clarified this in the final para of discussion, which now begins:

“As indicated by the proxy indicators of affluence in this study, many families in Bangladesh are too poor to pay for their child's clubfoot treatment.”

Page 6 Lines 2834

With regards to parents' preference, was there any formal qualitative methodology employed to collect this data?
Thank you. Within the Discussion section, this has been better clarified, and now reads:

“The parents' preference for more frequent cast changes was expressed to treating clinicians, and specifically, parents reportedly liked visualising and washing their child's foot and leg at shortened intervals.”

Page 7 Lines 1123

Could the authors elaborate on the French method principles?

Thank you. The Discussion doe specify the relevant French method principle at this point:

“Questions pending include: would active dorsiflexion mobilizing exercises during the brace phase assist, invoking French method principles;…”

Table 1

*Could the authors either spell out the word average or use a valid abbreviation. Either avg. or av.

Thank you. Avg has now been used, as suggested

*Column Average

age at start

Could the authors either use only days or weeks for consistency.

Thank you. We have reported the ages directly from the papers, to show the differences, and the final 'summary' row has been included to alleviate the inconsistency.

* For consistency within the table could the authors add SD for all RCTs?

Thank you. Unfortunately, not all RCTs included SDs, so we could only report those available.

* Morecuende (2005) average age “?” unknown? Could the authors comment on this

Thank you. This was unclear and has now been amended to read” not stated”.
Cast changed "5 days": is that 1/week? For consistency.

Thank you. The stated 5 days was exactly 5 days, so this remains.

Reviewer #2:

In the background section, Line 16 you repeat the word countries after your abbreviation of LMIC's, you could remove the word countries as it is not required.

Thank you. Amended as suggested

Results section: Line 46 Physiotherapists also preferred the.....

Thank you. Amended as suggested

Discussion section: Line 21 necessitate more casts, which increases the childs immobilisation time and uses more resources

Thank you. Amended as suggested

line 47 bleeding, uncorrected foot position and difficult procedure being cited

Thank you. Amended as suggested

The possibility of further modifications section: Line 2: with a 'Shotgun'

Thank you. Amended as suggested

Conclusion Line 32: viz what does this mean? visual? please explain

Thank you = viz. is a standard abbreviation for 'namely' - and so remains.

Table 1, second column, Number of subjects = n rather than just n.
Thank you. Amended as suggested

Clearly the many helpful suggestions from both reviewers have improved this paper, and again, the authors wish to extend our thanks for these helpful reviews and comments.

If any points of response are at all unclear, we will be only too pleased to comment further.

Thank you once again for all assistance with this manuscript.

With very kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Angela Evans