Author's response to reviews

Title: Electro-acupuncture for treatment of knee pain from osteoarthritis and the possible endocrinology changes, quality of life improvement and reduction of pain medication use: a study protocol for a randomized controlled trial

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Author's response to reviews: see over
A randomized, parallel, double-blind trial of electro-acupuncture for treatment of knee pain from osteoarthritis and the possible: endocrinology changes, quality of life improvement and reduction of pain medication use.

Javier Mata, Sandra Cabrera, Pilar Sanchís, Pedro Valentí, Patricia Hernández, Regina Fortuny, Serafin Lirola and José Luís Aguilar

Dear Editors of Trials,

We would like to thank the referees for their comments and suggestions, as these have helped us to greatly improve the quality of the manuscript.

We have made the following modifications, which are represented below, point by point in accordance to the referee’s comments.

1. Please ensure the title conforms to journal style for study protocol articles. The title should follow the format?_________: study protocol for a randomized controlled trial.?  

The title has been modified according to the journal title style for study protocols. The title now reads as: “Electro-acupuncture for treatment of knee pain from osteoarthritis and the possible endocrinology changes, quality of life improvement and reduction of pain medication use: a study protocol for a randomized controlled trial”

2. Please include the date of registration with the trial registration number at the end of the Abstract.  

The registration date and the registration number have been included at the end of the Abstract, and reads as follows:  
**Trial registration:** ClinicalTrials.govNCT02299713 (11 November 2014)

3. Please include a Trial Status section after the Discussion. This should state the status of the trial at the time of manuscript submission. The journal considers study protocol articles for proposed or ongoing trials provided they have not completed patient recruitment at the time of submission.

The trial status has been included in a section at the end of the discussion indicating the current status of our study and reads as follows:  
Trial status: The trial is currently in the recruitment phase. Participant recruitment began in January 2015, and is expected to end in December 2015.

4. 4. Please include a list of abbreviations used and their meanings, after the reference list.

A list of the abbreviations used and their meanings has been included and placed after the reference list. The list reads as such:

**Abbreviations:**  
CMI: Corporal mass index; CONSORT: Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials; EA: Electro-acupuncture; EDTA: Ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid; EO: Endogenous opioid system; GADS: Goldberg Anxiety and Depression Scale; Group A: Experimental group; Group B: Control group; HPA: Hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal; NICE: UK National Institute of Clinical Excellence; OA:  

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**Editors-in-Chief**  
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Osteoarthritis; OARSI: Osteoarthritis Research International; PET: Positron emission tomography; SA: Sham acupuncture; SF-36v2: The Short Form 36 version 2 health survey; STRICTA: Standards for Reporting Interventions in Clinical Trials of Acupuncture; TCM: Traditional Chinese Medicine; VAS: Visual analogue scale; WOMAC: Western Ontario and McMaster Universities Osteoarthritis Index.

5. Please upload the figures as separate files via the online submission system. They should not be included within the main manuscript document.

The figure has been uploaded in a separate file.

6. Please include a figure title and legend section after the reference list.

The legend is included in the main manuscript text file at the end of the document, after the reference list.
I have modified this Figure legend: It now reads:

Figure 1. Trial Flow
The trial flow is described, indicating patient selection process, treatment and follow up where:
* Visual analogue scale (VAS), McMaster Universities Osteoarthritis Index (WOMAC), Short-Form Health Survey (SF-36v2), blood sample collection, Goldberg Anxiety and Depression scales and medication use are measured on each follow up visit.
EA: Electroacupuncture.

7. Please move the tables below the reference list.

The tables have been moved to below the reference list.

8. The background is too long and should be made concise.

The introduction has been shortened and made concise.

9. What is the meaning of the numbers in Trial process chart?

The numbers in the Trial process chart show the visit frequency for each stage of the experiment that the patients must complete for the study. The table has been modified to make this information more explicit.
Table 1. Planned visit schedule for treatment and follow up, indicating visit number and the frequency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visits</th>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1st</td>
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<td>10th</td>
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<td>(2 weekly/month)</td>
<td>(Follow up 1st month)</td>
<td>(Follow up 3rd month)</td>
<td>(Follow up 45 days)</td>
<td>(Follow up 6th month)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Follow up 1st month)</td>
<td>(Follow up 3rd month)</td>
<td>(Follow up 45 days)</td>
<td>(Follow up 6th month)</td>
<td>(every 2 months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Follow up 1st month)</td>
<td>(Follow up 3rd month)</td>
<td>(Follow up 45 days)</td>
<td>(Follow up 6th month)</td>
<td>End of follow up (1 year)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. The English language is poor and need an extensive correction.

The English has been thoroughly revised by a native English speaker in order to improve the comprehension of the manuscript.

Thank you for your consideration,
Sincerely,

Javier Mata
Senior Consultant, Anaesthesiology and Clinic Pain Department
Son Llàtzer Hospital