Author's response to reviews

Title: Tongue strengthening exercises in head and neck cancer patients: does exercise load matter? - study protocol for a randomized controlled trial.

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Version: 2   Date: 16 April 2015

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor,  
Dear reviewers,  

Thank you for your remarks on our manuscript. We have processed your requests and remarks. For more detailed information, please see below.

Request 1:

‘Before your manuscript can be sent to our Editorial Board for their initial consideration, please could you provide us with copies of the original funding and ethics documentation. We would very much appreciate it if you could provide these in English, or provide translations to accompany the original documents.

We need to confirm the following:

- that the documentation refers to the correct study and we can tell which body granted the approvals
- that full ethical approval has been given (i.e. not with conditions)
- if funding is external (from a government/research organisation)

Please could you email the documentation to us. We encourage you do this as soon as possible to minimise any delay to the processing of your manuscript.’

Answer:
We included the original agreements of the Ethical Committee and the funding by the Belgian Government. Both documents are in Dutch. Translations are provided in the document of the Ethical Committee (text boxes) and in a separate file for the funding agreement.

Requests 2-7:

Formatting changes

There are a number of matters that require your attention before your manuscript can be peer reviewed, as the manuscript does not conform to the journal style. These are outlined below, but we advise that you check our instructions for authors http://www.trialsjournal.com/info/instructions/ for more information:

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.” Please note that the title in the submission system should match that of your manuscript.
Answer: adjusted

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

3. Please include the full name of the approving ethical committee with your ethics statement in the Methods section.
Answer: the (translated) full name of the EC used in official documents is ‘Ethical Committee of the Antwerp University Hospital and University of Antwerp’. We added the original dutch name in parenthesis.

4. Please include a statement in your Methods section explaining that you obtained informed consent from each participant.
Answer: added (see ‘Ethical approval’)

5. Please mention each author individually in the Authors’ Contributions section, and keep the initialling of authors consistent.
   Answer: adjusted

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

Best wishes,

Prof. Dr. Gwen Van Nuffelen