Author’s response to reviews

Title: Self-declared stock ownership and association with positive trial outcome in RCTs with binary outcomes published in general medical journals- a cross-sectional study

Authors:

Alberto Falk Delgado (alberto.falk-delgado@surgsci.uu.se)

Anna Falk Delgado (anna.falk-delgado@karolinska.se)

Version: 2 Date: 03 Jun 2017

Author’s response to reviews:

The authors would like to thank the reviewers for their remarks and the time and effort spent assessing the current manuscript. The suggested alterations strengthened the manuscript considerably. Point to point comments are found below.

Comment 1: Clarify if this methodological review has been registered via PROSPERO (https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/PROSPERO/) . If so, provide the registration number?

Answer 1: Thank you pointing this out. We have now clarified this by adding the following sentence in the text. "This study was not registered in Prospero since the outcome was not related to patient or clinical outcome."

Comment 2: In addition, why is the protocol of the review not accessible even if it is not registered? - In the supplementary excel file you provided, please include the “doi” number of the publications reviewed. It much easier for readers to search publications if they wish that using first author and year.

Answer 2: Thank you. We have included the full review protocol in the supplementary file and also included the DOI number.

Comment 3: COI should be defined when first used in the abstract
Answer 3: Thank you for acknowledging this. We have now defined COI in the abstract.

Comment 4: In the abstract, what does this mean ‘p0.01’? Please correct this accordingly.

Answer 4: Thank you for commenting on this. We agree that this is confusing and have erased the p-values and the corresponding ORs in the abstract.

Comment 5: This paper, is looking only looked at declared conflict of interest so this should be stated upfront (in the methods and title) and not only in the discussion/limitations. For instance, the title could be ‘Self-declared stock ownership and …. ’

Answer 5: We agree with the reviewer and have now added ”self-declared” in the title and the following text in the methods section: “We only considered self-declared COI in the study.”

Comment 6: Include a PRISMA flowchart

Answer 6: We have now added the PRISMA flow chart. Figure 1

Comment 7: This sentence in the discussion should reflect and cite Dr Leo’s case because this is important as highlighted by the reviewer … “As we only considered self-declared conflict of interest, there is a potential of underreporting of the actual conflict of interest that might exist.

Answer 7: Thank you for pointing this out. We have now added the above mentioned reference and the following text in the discussion: “As we only considered self-declared conflict of interest, there is a potential of underreporting of the actual conflict of interest that might exist as shown previously [20].”
Comment 8: Some results in Table 1 really odd (huge uncertainty) due to the fact that there are no or very few events in the reference group. Is it worth fitting a model in such cases or description of differences in observed proportions is more than enough?

Answer 8: We agree that this is a little bit confusing, we have now erased the OR for comparison in Table 1.