Author's response to reviews

Title: Repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (rTMS) for Treatment-Resistant Major Depression (TRMD) Veteran Patients: Study Protocol for a Randomized Controlled Trial

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The secondary outcomes are still unclear.

Response: The secondary outcomes include Montgomery-Asberg Depression Rating Scale (MADRS), Beck Scale for Suicide Ideation (BSS), Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), Veterans RAND 36 Item Health Survey (VR-36), and a neuropsychological battery as stated in Outcome Section on page 12. To be clearer, we added a column to specify primary and secondary outcomes in Table 2a.

Please clarify what time points will be analysed. Indeed for repeated outcome measures, it is usually not relevant analysing all time points. It does not make sens for example to perform an analysis at end of each acute treatment week. In the reporting of outcome, it is important to distinguish assessment (when it will be measured) and the outcome that should report the time point of analysis.

Response: We added the following paragraph: “The primary endpoint analysis will be based on the primary outcome measurement at end of the treatment. Secondary outcome analyses are focused on the three time points, i.e. baseline, end of the treatment, and end of the follow-up. However, the measurements from all time points are used to illustrate the trend of outcome measurement changes across time.” on page 15.

Please let me know if additional information is needed.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.
Sincerely,

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