Author's response to reviews

Title: Nutritional vitamin D supplementation and health-related outcomes in hemodialysis patients: a protocol for a systematic review and meta-analysis

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Author's response to reviews: see over
December 1, 2014

*Systematic Reviews* Editorial Board

Dear Editorial Board:

Attached please find our revised manuscript, “Nutritional vitamin D supplementation and health-related outcomes in hemodialysis patients: a protocol for a systematic review and meta-analysis” to be considered for publication in *Systematic Reviews*. We thank the reviewer for his positive comments and note that he made no suggestions for changes to the manuscript. As such, please find attached a revised manuscript that simply addresses the editorial comments/requests:

Handling Editor comments:
"Please ask the authors to justify their decision to restrict to RCTs over 20 people, particularly in the light of the potential for a limited evidence base.

We initially thought to restrict our systematic review to RCTs with at least 20 participants to ensure that we were only including adequately powered studies. However, as the handling editor points out, there is definitely potential for a limited evidence base. Hence, we have amended the protocol (see page 7 of the manuscript) to include all RCTs, regardless of sample size.

Also please define more clearly what will influence their decision to include non randomised studies, particular what they consider sufficient "high quality " RCTs to be."

Please see additional comments on page 9 of the manuscript. We will consider broadening our inclusion criteria to include nonrandomized/uncontrolled interventional trials if we find fewer than 5 eligible RCTs for this review. We acknowledge that defining inclusion “sufficiency” as 5 or more studies is somewhat arbitrary. However, we wanted to establish a priori a point at which we will consider changing our inclusion strategy to maximize the utility of performing a systematic review on this topic.

Editorial requests:
1) Please add the following statement to the end of your Author’s Contributions section: “All authors read and approved the final manuscript.”

Please see page 11 of the manuscript for the addition of this statement.

We thank you again for your consideration of our manuscript. We look forward to hearing your response.

Sincerely,

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