Author's response to reviews

Title: Measurement properties of adult quality of life measurement instruments for eczema: protocol for a systematic review

Authors:

Christian J Apfelbacher (christian.apfelbacher@klinik.uni-regensburg.de)
Daniel Heinl (daniel.heinl@stud.uni-regensburg.de)
Sanna Prinsen (c.prinsen@vumc.nl)
Stefanie Deckert (Stefanie.Deckert@uniklinikum-dresden.de)
Robert Ofenloch (Robert.Ofenloch@med.uni-heidelberg.de)
Rosemary Humphreys (RNHumphreys@aol.com)
Tracey Sach (t.sach@uea.ac.uk)
Sarah Chamlin (schamlin@luriechildrens.org)
Jochen Schmitt (jochen.Schmitt@uniklinikum-dresden.de)

Version: 2 Date: 3 March 2015

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editors

many thanks for your reply and helpful feedback on our protocol “Measurement properties of adult quality of life measurement instruments for eczema”. We have made the corrections as requested. You will find a point-by-point response below, first to the reviewer’s comments and then to the Editorial team.

Minor essential revisions from Referee 1

1) Referee: The first sentence talks about the justification being eczema being very common in children yet this focuses on adults. Perhaps a different first sentence would be better.

Authors: We appreciate your suggestion here and have altered the first sentence. We have now included a reference relating to adult eczema.

2) Referee: The methods section does not need an aim.

Authors: The respective sentence was removed from the methods section.

3) Referee: Are there any other relevant databases that could be searched e.g. Cochrane library/DARE?

Authors: The Cochrane library focusses on systematic reviews of interventions or diagnostic test accuracy. The Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects (DARE) contains systematic reviews evaluating the effects of healthcare interventions and the delivery/organisation of health services. DARE also contains reviews of the wider determinants of health where these impact directly on health, or have the potential to impact on health. Since the aim of our review is to assess the quality of development and validation studies of quality of life measurement...
instruments, the Cochrane library and DARE are not suitable information resources for our purposes.

4) Referee: Is there a copy of the full search strategy available for review or to be published with the protocol?

Authors: In order to provide greater clarity, we would be happy to supply the full search strategy to the readers of the journal, e.g. in the form of an appendix.

5) Referee: “Measurement instruments do not necessarily need to have an acronym to be eligible” – surely this is a redundant statement?

Authors: We have removed the sentence.

6) Referee: Table 1 the exclusion criteria includes “populations of adults with eczema”

Authors: We have already noticed this mistake shortly after we sent in the protocol. The statement has been corrected.


Authors: The definitions presented in table 2 were developed by the COSMIN initiative. They were not altered by us, meaning that the definitions for ‘construct validity’ and ‘hypotheses testing’ are in deed identical. “Idem” is Latin and means “the same”. As we are going to apply the COSMIN checklist to evaluate the eligible studies, we think that the related definitions should be used for reasons of clarity and comprehensibility.

Handling editor’s comments
1) Please also clarify whether general dermatology measures (such as the DLQI) would be eligible for inclusion; the inclusion criteria suggest that such measures could be eligible if they included an eczema subgroup, but restricting the search to eczema alone might risk missing these relevant general dermatology instruments.

Authors: Dermatology specific measures such as the DLQI or the Skindex are eligible. However, we are only going to include such development/validation studies for those measures that either present subgroup analyses for atopic eczema or whose study population consists of at least 50% eczema patients. We will not consider studies eligible that do not meet the aforementioned criteria since these instruments will have insufficient validation data for eczema.

2) Also please ensure the protocol states any funding or support received, in line with the PRISMA-P statement (http://www.systematicreviewsjournal.com/content/4/1/1).

Authors: We have included a separate funding statement (p.18).

Requests from editorial staff
1) We have added our PROSPERO registration number (p.6).
2) We have removed the tables from the main body of our manuscript (p.21 following).
3) We have included a discussion section (p.17).
4) We have added an acknowledgement section (p.18).
Additional changes

1) Section “Literature search”: The sentence “Scale inaugurators will be contacted to identify possible additional articles and grey literature” has been removed.

2) Section “Eligible studies”: In the second sentence of this section, we replaced the words “more than” by “at least” because we wanted to ensure that studies with exactly 50% eczema patients will be eligible, too.

3) Section “Data abstraction”: The expression “average time needed for administration” was changed into “time needed for administration” according to a consensus obtained by the reviewers when discussing about the evidence tables.

4) Section “Content comparison”: The second sentence “If the domains measured by an instrument cannot be extracted from the studies included, the original development paper may be consulted to obtain missing information” was changed to “The original development paper is going to be consulted to obtain this information”. We did so because we realized that it would become difficult to combine different findings about the content of an instrument.

5) Section “Abbreviations”: “PROM” was changed to “PRO” because only “PRO” is used in the text.

6) Table 2: Below table 2, the abbreviation “CCT” was replaced by “CTT” (spelling mistake).

7) Table 3: IRT criteria for structural validity and interpretability criteria were added.

All authors have read and approved the revised draft of the protocol for Systematic Reviews.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

Christian Apfelbacher