Author’s response to reviews

Title: Effects of aerobic exercise in the treatment of older adults patients with chronic musculoskeletal pain: a protocol of a systematic review

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Author’s response to reviews:

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Farhad Shokraned
Associate editor, Systematic Reviews

Dear Prof. Farhad Shokraned,

We reviewed the manuscript "Effects of aerobic exercise in the treatment of elderly patients with chronic musculoskeletal pain: a protocol of a systematic review". Below you can find the answer to every comment. In addition, we changed the sentence “elderly patients” to “older adults” in lines 1, 27, 31, 32, 36, 41, 43, 49, 59, 70, 72, 76, 77, 80, 90, 91, 92-93, 103, 212-213, and 216. In line 120, we changed the sentence “physiotherapy” to “physical therapy” and in line 203-204, we changed the sentence “the entire research group” to “all authors”. Moreover, we included the correct e-mail of each author (lines 11, 14, and 17).

Regards,
Reviewer reports:

Reviewer #1

1. Lines 178-180. The authors plan to include a meta-analysis, if possible. I would highly recommended that the investigators include a meta-analysis. Please update the protocol to include sufficient detail on the meta-analytic procedures: software, sub-group analyses, sensitivity analyses, meta-regression, etc. A key limitation to the reproducibility of many meta-analysis is the calculation of treatment effect. Please be specific as to how you will calculate the between-group statistic; comparison of change scores or comparison of time-points.

Response: Thanks for the suggestion. We made the suggested change (lines 179-180 and 182-186).

2. Line 63: "…may present disability…” This is awkward phrasing. Consider "…may present with disability…”

Response: Thanks for the suggestion. We made the suggested change (line 64).

3. Lines 88-89: "…no systematic review verified…” Change to "…no systematic review has verified…”

Response: Thanks for the suggestion. We made the suggested change (line 90).

4. Lines 106-109. Participants must be older than 65 years of age. Please provide further detail on how this will be applied. Will the mean age of a study's participants be > 65 years? Will all participants need to be aged over 65 years?

Response: Thank you for the observation. We modified the phrase (lines 107-108).

5. Line 134: Change "Addicional" to "Additional".
Response: Thanks for the correction. We made the suggested change (line 137).

6. Line 137: Change "april" to "April".
Response: Thanks for the suggestion. As we must run the search strategy again, because it was made a few months ago, we changed the date to August (line 140).

7. Lines 132-137: Will the authors search for unpublished literature?
Response: Thank you for your question. This systematic review will include only published studies, as these studies have undergone peer review, avoiding publication bias, since the results of unpublished studies may systematically differ from the published studies (Song, Fujian, Lee Hooper, and Yoon Loke. "Publication bias: what is it? How do we measure it? How do we avoid it?." Open Access Journal of Clinical Trials 2013.5 (2013): 71-81.). We added information about this in the manuscript (line 102).

Reviewer #2:

1. It would be better if you limit the period of searching on databases, so that it would be more exact and clear. Because the recent one will be more up to date.
Response: Thank you for your suggestion. This systematic review will include a broad search on the topic in order to include all studies that have been published so far. Thus, the search will be carried out from the beginning of publication of each database to the present moment.

2. How about the ethical clearance/approval? Since there were human involvement, it would be best if it includes the ethical approval
Response: Ethical approval is not required as our study is a systematic review of randomized controlled trials. The included studies should have ethical approval because human participants were included. However, our systematic review will analyze data already collected and is exempt of ethical approval.

3. In the 55th line, where does the prevalence apply? Globally or in your country?
Response: Prevalence is applied globally. In this way, we included the word “global” in the text (line 56).

4. There should be a swap for the third sentence of the first paragraph in the background with the first sentence of the second paragraph of the background.

Response: Thanks for the suggestion. We made the suggested change (lines 55 and 56).

5. Is there any criteria of the settings of the studies? Or it could be in any medical facilities? It should be mentioned.

Response: Thanks for the suggestion. We made the suggested change (line 104).

6. In line 128, it would be better to have a proceeding sentence like "The outcomes will be classified into three periods" then you can start mentioning how you classified it into short, medium, and long term.

Response: Thanks for the suggestion. We made the suggested change (line 130).