Author's response to reviews

Title: Nutritional status of cancer outpatients using Scored Patient Generated Subjective Global Assessment in Two Cancer Treatment Centers, Nairobi, Kenya

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Author’s response to reviews:

26.04.2017

Dr. Alison Yaxley,
The Editor
BMC Nutrition

Dear Dr. Yaxley,

RE: NUTN-D-17-00046-NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF CANCER OUTPATIENTS USING SCORED PATIENT GENERATED SUBJECTIVE GLOBAL ASSESSMENT IN TWO CANCER TREATMENT CENTERS, NAIROBI, KENYA

I have addressed the comments raised by the reviewers. Find my responses below.
1. Syed A. Aziz (Reviewer 1): It is a nice study, not completely original, but there are some areas which I have highlighted in the attached file. Please provide your explanation why you think, or back by some reference where necessary. There are few areas I have highlighted in discussion please provide some explanation as this is one of the reason of discussing your result is to provide some comment of yours, to support your findings.

The comment was noted and addressed in the discussion section, on page 12 paragraph 3, line 238-252 and on page 13-14 paragraph 4 line, 263-275

2. Judi Porter (Reviewer 2): I really enjoyed your well-considered manuscript. I have added several comments for your consideration in preparation of a revised manuscript. My main request though is that you develop and extend the interpretation of your findings (ie. discussion) into the international audience of this journal. For example, please consider what the similarities to the Australian findings that you compare your results against (ref 7) for future nutrition practice in Kenya. I assume that there are different challenges in delivering healthcare in Kenya versus Australia and other westernized countries (access to healthcare professionals, budget restrictions for oral nutrition support products etc.) so how will this affect your work practices into the future, especially with patients with SGA C?

The comment was noted and addressed in the discussion section, on page 11 paragraph 1, line 226-237

3. Limitations should be included also in the discussion, especially regarding your recruitment strategy (if patients were not consecutively chosen or the entire cohort of cancer patients at these two hospitals).

Systematic random sampling was used to select the participants hence not a limitation of the study. The only limitation was that terminally ill outpatients who were experiencing severe symptoms and could not answer questions or complete the assessment process were excluded from the study.

4. Other comments:

- Abstract:

  line 15 aim was to assess AND DESCRIBE - please replace throughout.

  line 29 - 33.8% OF PARTICIPANTS - please add. The words assessed and described have been added in the abstract on page 2 line 36, methods section page 4 line 101 and 102. The words “of participants” have been added on the abstract line 42

- Background: page 3 Line 38 - suggest accepted and validated be swapped to "validate and accepted"

The comment was noted and this has been corrected in the background section on page 3 line 81 and 82
• page 4 Line 9 - please spell dietitian correctly throughout

The comment was noted and the correct spelling included in background section, page4 line 92 and 94

• page 4 line 22 - suggest reword to "the tool has not been utilized for the nutritional assessment of cancer patients in Kenya"

The comment was noted and the statement has been reworded in the background section on page 3 line 97

• page 4 line 24 - reword aim as described above

The aim has been reworded to include “assess and describe”

• page 4 line 48 - add a reference for sample size estimation. It is unclear how the sample size was calculate (it is difficult to reproduce from the information provided) - please elaborate.

The reference for the Fishers et al formulae has been added as a footnote on page 4 line 109. A description on how the sample size was derived has been included on page 5 line 124-127

• page 4 line 58 - sentence is incomplete.

The sentence has been completed page 5 line 130 and 131

• page 4 Please extend recruitment as it is not reproducible in its current form. What was the recruitment strategy? Were patients randomly or purposively chosen; were they consecutive or a convenience sample? Also, was training provided for all staff in the study protocol?

Information on the sampling technique used and procedure has been included as well as information of training of the staff who implemented the study on page 5 and 6 line 127-138.

• page 5 lines 25-52. This entire section is a rework of the calculation of the PGSGA score and is excessive. Please abbreviate (eg in a table) or refer readers to the original paper for detailed understanding of the tool.

Table 1 indicating PGSGA global assessment guidelines has been included on page 7 line 157-158

• page 6 line 4 - please use "were" to follow "data" since it is used in plural in this instance.

• page 6 line 29 - were these percentages a proportion of the overall cohort of participants? Please clarify. Refer to table 1 page 7 line 157-158
- page 6 table 1 - for international readers, is there a diagnostic reference that you would recommend for cancer stages? Please include the citation to each table and the first time in the text.

Information and citation on how cancer staging is done in Kenya has been included on page 7 line 159-164

- page 7 line 8 - Please use hyphens consistently throughout the manuscript - both hyphens and underscores are used. All underscores have been replaced by hyphens throughout the entire manuscript

- Table 3 - Please add reference as a footnote for the PGSGA tool.

References have been added as footnotes refer to table 4 page 10 line 204-205