Author’s response to reviews

Title: Early Integrated Palliative Care in Chronic Heart Failure and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease: protocol of a feasibility before-after intervention study.

Authors:

Naouma Siouta (naouma.siouta@gmail.com)
Arne Heylen (arne.heylen@uzleuven.be)
Bert Aertgeerts (bert.aertgeerts@kuleuven.be)
Paul Clement (paul.clement@uzleuven.be)
Johan Van Cleemput (johan.vancleemput@uzleuven.be)
Wim Janssens (wim.janssens@uzleuven.be)
Johan Menten (johan.menten@uzleuven.be)

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Dear Editor,

First of all, we would like to thank you for the time that you spent with our manuscript and for your comments. Everything has been addressed in the revised version. You can find the exact changes in yellow highlighted color in the text.

Minor Comments:

Comment 1: The first sentence in Background is confusing. While the reference from WHO shows that only COPD leads to the 3rd cause of death, your sentence indicates the combination of CHF+COPD is the 3rd cause. Please rectify and clarify it.
Reply: We agree with the Editor and we have clarified this sentence in lines 74-76 as follows:

“According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Chronic Heart Failure (CHF) is the first cause of death worldwide while Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is the third one [1].”

Comment 2: The ad-hoc questionnaire has not been validated or published yet. Please mention it as a limitation.

Reply: The following limitation has been now added in lines 397-399:

“Another limitation of this study is the use of the self-developed ad-hoc questionnaire that has not been yet validated and published. This fact will be taken into consideration when performing the statistical analysis”.

Comment 3: Tables 1 & 2, and Figure 2 need some footnotes to interpret the abbreviations appeared in the tables/fig; eg, MRC, CAT shown in table 2.

Reply: All the abbreviations have been now added in the revised version of tables 1, 2 and figure 2.