Author’s response to reviews

Title: Systematic reviews of prognosis studies: a critical appraisal of five core clinical journals.

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"Systematic reviews of prognosis studies: a critical appraisal of five core clinical journals"

November 23rd, 2016

Dear Editor and reviewers,

Thank you for the revision of our manuscript and the helpful comments and suggestions.

We would like to resubmit for publication the revised version of manuscript DAPR-D-16-00008R1 " Systematic reviews of prognosis studies: a critical appraisal of five core clinical journals ".

All of the Reviewers’ and Editorial suggestions for amendment, have been taken into consideration as detailed in the point-by-point response.

Best regards,

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Associate Editor: please take Reviewer 2’s comments into consideration. To corroborate on the data sharing issue, we noticed that you have written 'Not Applicable' under the Data availability declaration. Please revise this, because a systematic review implies that data has been collected. We would like to ask you to consider sharing the data collected for this manuscript.

Authors’ response: As suggested by Referees #2 a sentence was added under “Data Availability Declaration”.

Reviewer #1: Dear Editor & Associate Editor,

Apologies for the delay, but I was on annual leave last week.

The authors have substantially improved the manuscript and I believe they have replied to my queries in a satisfactory manner. I have no further comments.

Reviewer #2: The authors have significantly improved the manuscript and it is now much easier to follow. In particular, the intro, discussion, tables have been greatly improved. I have a few minor suggestions.

BACKGROUND
Ln. 13. Systematic reviews of prognosis studies -> should be "of" or "on"

Ln 12. Suggest rewording the aim as follows: "The purpose of this study was to assess the quality of SRs of prognostic studies published over the last decade in five high-impact journals"

Authors’ response: We thank the Reviewer for this suggestions, the text has been amended.

METHODS
Ln. 17 summarizing -> summarized

Authors’ response: We have corrected the sentence as suggested.
Literature search - The details of the search could be put in an appendix.

Authors’ response: The literature search has been moved and submitted as “Appendix”.

Quality assessment - Ln. 18. Consider rewording as "checklists as a proxy for the quality" because you reporting guidelines and quality assessment tools are related, but different things.

Authors’ response: We have modified the text as suggested.

DISCUSSION

Pg. 7, Ln 20. I am not a search expert, but I've heard that the label "review" in medline is quite different that "systematic review", which I think is the statistic that you want. I don't know if it was a problem that you used the filter "review" instead of "systematic review" in your search strategy. If anything, my guess is that it would have resulted in a more sensitive, but less specific search. This might explain why you found so many titles and abstracts.

Authors’ response: We apologize for the inaccuracy and thank the Reviewer for pointing this out: it is indeed “systematic review” correct in that sentence. Text has been amended.

Pg. 8, Ln 5. It would be nice if you could elaborate a little more on assessing confounding. Maybe a conclusion could be that risk of bias tools should pay careful attention to confounding, as this is something that is difficult to assess?

Authors’ response: The sentence has been modified as suggested.

Pg. 9, Ln. 12. This sentence makes it sound like you assessed all 4 types of prognostic studies. Can you reword it so that you say that you didn't look into the differences in types 1 and 2?

Authors’ response: Text has been changed according to the

Reviewer comment.

Pg. 9. Limitations paragraph could be shortened a bit. Lns 15-21 aren't essential.
DATA SHARING

I don't know what the journal's policy on data sharing is. You have collected a nice dataset and you could add a sentence saying that you would be willing to share (portions of) it, if that is the case.

Authors’ response: We’ve added a sentence as suggested by the Reviewer under the section “Data Sharing”.

TABLES

While the tables are quite full, I find them much more informative. The only suggestion that I have is that it would be nice to add breaks for the subcategories for the reporting guidelines, if these tools have them (I don't remember).

Authors’ response: We want to thank the Reviewer for their suggestions, the Tables have been modified as per the Reviewer’s comment.