Author’s response to reviews

Title: Gout and Sexual Function: Patient Perspective of how gout affects personal relationships and Intimacy

Authors:

Jasvinder Singh (jasvinder.md@gmail.com)

Version: 2 Date: 17 Dec 2018

Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor:

We thank you for your comments and have addressed both comments. We look forward to your decision.

Regards,

Jas Singh

We thank the Editor/s for their comments and have made the necessary revisions. Please see our response to their comments below.

Technical Comments:

Editor Comments:

Thank you for responding so promptly and clearly to the reviewer's comments, I am pleased to accept your manuscript for publication in BMC Rheumatology. However, prior to publication could you please make the couple of minor amendments outlined below to provide additional clarity.

1. Amend aims/objectives at the end of page 3 (lines 46-60). Aims (general purpose of study) should proceed objectives (specific purpose of study) and the description of NGT should be moved to the methods. Furthermore, the first use of NGT is not explained in full in the first line of this section.
Response: We agree and have revised the aims/objectives, provided full form for the NGT abbreviation and have moved the NGT description to methods section.

“Our study aim was to address this important knowledge gap by performing formative work in people with gout. The study objective was to assess the effect of gout on the relationship with spouse or significant other, including the effect on intimacy, using the Nominal Group Technique (NGT). A secondary objective was to assess whether these effects differed by patient gender.”

“A nominal group technique is a variation of brainstorming where individuals come up with ideas on their own and evaluate, rank, and agree on ideas as a group; in other words it is a group process of problem identification, generation of solution/s and decision-making [21, 22]. The NGT is a variant on traditional focus group that taps the participants’ experiences, skills, views or feelings and promotes that has been used successfully in various medical settings [28-34]. One of the main differences from the focus group is that NGT allows an even participation of each participant, in contrast to possible domination by only the most active participants, and less participation by others participants. NGT also allows discussion of the problems identified.”

2. Conclusion. Please correct first sentence, doesn't read properly at present

Response: We have corrected this as suggested to improve readability of the conclusions section.

“In conclusion, this formative study assessed the effect of gout on relationships with spouse/significant other and sexual function. In a community-based outpatient clinic sample of people with gout, we found that gout affected relationships with spouse and sexual function quite commonly, and in several ways. A major impact was related to the acute and chronic joint pain and the associated disability, with physical and emotional impact on intimacy being the highest ranked responses. Study participants also noted loss of trust with spouse, loss of relationship, and significant social life impact due of gout. This study advances our knowledge of the true impact of gout on people’s sex lives. This study also brings to light an aspect of patient suffering, previously not recognized or well-described. The healthcare providers should discuss the impact of gout on relationships with patients with gout during clinic visits and address it appropriately. A reversal of a negative impact of gout on intimacy with appropriate disease control can serve as a positive reinforcement for some patients and might help to increase treatment and medication adherence.”