

Author's response to reviews

Title: Musculoskeletal Ultrasound Imaging Of The Plantar Forefoot In Patients With Rheumatoid Arthritis: Agreement of A Podiatrist and A Radiologist

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The Editor
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18.06.08

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Reviewer's comments for the manuscript "Musculoskeletal ultrasound imaging of the plantar forefoot in patients with rheumatoid arthritis: Agreement of a podiatrist and a radiologist".

Following the reviewers' comments, please find enclosed a revised manuscript for submission within the Journal of Foot and Ankle Research. All the comments have been addressed accordingly as follows:

Comment No	Amendments: reviewer 1
1.	Last paragraph in the introduction has been amended to <i>"This study provided an opportunity to evaluate the inter-observer agreement between a radiologist and podiatrist who had followed recommended training guidelines for MSUS, in the MSUS assessment of the forefoot of patients with RA. This work forms part of an ultrasound based research programme investigating the clinical relevance of soft tissue inflammation within the forefoot of patients with RA"</i> .
2.	Abstract first sentence changed to: <i>The use of musculoskeletal ultrasound (MSUS) in the diagnosis and management of foot and ankle musculoskeletal pathology is increasing</i>
3.	Method: subheadings have been merged to MSUS training and protocol development
4.	Have added <i>"Finally, the images selected for analysis after the consensus meeting were taken from part of the cohort that the podiatrist and radiologist used for the initial reliability analyses. Whilst the consensus meeting did take place once data collection was complete, an element of recall bias may have been introduced and thus should be acknowledged"</i> .
5.	The captions on both images have been amended

Comment No	Amendments: reviewer 2
6.	Title: has been amended to: " <i>Musculoskeletal Ultrasound Imaging Of The Plantar Forefoot In Patients With Rheumatoid Arthritis: Inter-observer Agreement Between A Podiatrist and A Radiologist</i> "
7.	Abstract: Has been amended to " <i>Due to the wide use of MSUS and the depth and breadth of training required new proposals advocate tailored learning of the technique to discrete fields of practice</i> ". And " <i>The aims of the study were to evaluate the inter-observer agreement between a MSUS radiologist and a podiatrist, who had completed basic skills training in MSUS, in the MSUS assessment of the forefoot of patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis</i> ".
8.	Introduction: Using MSUS has been removed
9.	Method: <i>etc</i> has been deleted " <i>The same consultant was available throughout the study to avoid any potential investigator bias</i> " has been deleted
10.	Discussion: The first paragraph has been amended to: " <i>The use of MSUS assessment of the foot and ankle in clinical practice would be beneficial to patients with RA in facilitating more effective timely referral and management of foot problems. This is the first study to investigate tailored learning of MSUS to the discrete field of foot and ankle practice in evaluating the inter-observer agreement in the use of MSUS between an allied health professional (podiatrist) and an expert radiologist on imaging of the foot</i> ".

I look forward to hearing from you in due course,

Yours sincerely

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