

BMJ - Decision on  
Manuscript ID  
BMJ.2018.044026

**Body:**

04-Jul-2018

Dear Dr. Kaptchuk

Manuscript ID BMJ.2018.044026 entitled "Open-label placebo: Can honestly prescribed placebos evoke meaningful therapeutic benefits?"

Thank you for letting us consider your resubmitted manuscript, which we discussed at our editorial meeting on 21 June 2018 (Present: Cat Chatfield, Navjoyt Ladher, Robert Redelmeir, Paul Simpson).

We are pleased to make a provisional offer of publication if you are able to revise it to address the points made by the editors set out below.

1. Thank you for revising your paper in response to comments from reviewers and editors. Editors found your paper thoughtful and interesting. We just have a few small suggestions for additional revisions prior to acceptance.

2. In some places we felt that there was a leap between the evidence presented and the resulting conclusions. Please go through the article and soften and signpost areas of speculation using more cautious language - particularly in the sections on neurobiological topics and also where you say "but OLP could be helpful for symptom management of cancer-related nausea, pain, hot flashes or, as we have seen, fatigue" (this needs to be referenced and softened)

3. We felt the conclusion could be more specific and clearer. It would be helpful to break down the conclusion that more research is needed into the component steps - what are the research questions of interest? How might this field move forward? What other actions might be helpful?

4. There was also a concern about whether the studies presented here represent the totality of the evidence base. Are there other negative studies that should be mentioned?

5. What is the message for patients at this stage? Could you elaborate on how doctors and patients might discuss this research and discuss what it means for current clinical practice?

6. You say: "Placebo is usually a pejorative term used to denigrate therapies deserving rejection" - we were not convinced that that is the common perception of placebo, particularly in a research context. Perhaps this phrasing could be amended?

7. Could you be clearer about how this paper advances on what you describe in your earlier NEJM article? <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1504023>

8. You say: "OLP research is disruptive." Please could you elaborate on what this means and adds?

We hope that you will be able to revise the paper and send it back to us within one month. When you resubmit, could you kindly ensure that you provide:

- (a) A covering letter outlining how you have responded, or not responded and why, to both the referees comments and those of the editors.
- (b) A word count (excluding the references and words in boxes and tables). You should aim to keep this count below or very close to 2000 words.

(c) Please check that all the information required in the manuscript (see note below) is included in the revised manuscript.

We hope that you will be able to revise the paper and send it back to us within one month.\*\* All accepted Analysis articles are published on thebmj.com, the canonical version of the journal. Please note that only a proportion of accepted Analysis articles will also be published in print. \*\*

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You will be unable to make your revisions on the originally submitted version of the manuscript. Instead, revise your manuscript using a word processing program and save it on your computer.

Once the revised manuscript is prepared, you can upload it and submit it through your Author Center.

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**IMPORTANT:** Your original files are available to you when you upload your revised manuscript. Please delete any redundant files before completing the submission.

I hope you will find the comments useful.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

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