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22-Oct-2020

BMJ-2020-060758 entitled "Nonsensus in the Treatment of Proximal Humerus Fractures? An Uncontrolled, Blinded, Comparative Behavioural Analysis Between Homo Chirurgicus Accidentus and Macaca Sylvanus"

Dear Mr. Razaean,

Thank you for sending us your paper. We sent it for external peer review and discussed it at our manuscript committee meeting. We recognise its potential importance and relevance to general medical readers, but I am afraid that we have not yet been able to reach a final decision on it because several important aspects of the work still need clarifying.

We hope very much that you will be willing and able to revise your paper as explained below in the report from the manuscript meeting, so that we will be in a better position to understand your study and decide whether the BMJ is the right journal for it. We are looking forward to reading the revised version and, we hope, reaching a decision.

Please remember that the author list and order were finalised upon initial submission, and reviewers and editors judged the paper in light of this information, particularly regarding any competing interests. If authors are later added to a paper this process is subverted. In that case, we reserve the right to rescind any previous decision or return the paper to the review process. Please also remember that we reserve the right to require formation of an authorship group when there are a large number of authors.

When you return your revised manuscript, please note that The BMJ requires an ORCID iD for corresponding authors of all research articles. If you do not have an ORCID iD, registration is free and takes a matter of seconds.

Regards,  
Timothy Feeney MD MS MPH  
Research Editor  
The BMJ  
tfeeney@bmj.com

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\*\*Report from The BMJ's manuscript committee meeting\*\*

These comments are an attempt to summarise the discussions at the manuscript meeting. They are not an exact transcript.

Members of the committee were: Elizabeth Loder (chair); Gary Collins (statistician); John Fletcher; Wim Weber; David Ludwig; Joseph Ross; Tiago Villanueva; Jin-ling Tang, Timothy Feeney

Decision: Put points

Detailed comments from the meeting:

First, please revise your paper to respond to all of the comments by the reviewers. Their reports are available at the end of this letter, below.

Please also respond to these additional comments by the committee:

We found this study and write-up to be entertaining, and likely a good fit for the Christmas issue. We do feel that some changes recommended by the reviewers would be helpful. Additionally, we have some comments we hope you will take into consideration.

\* Can you consider a less text heavy way to present the results?

\* Please consider how to improve the presentation of the results including addition of the the raw agreements for each case against the actual treatment and observed outcome

\* We felt that the methods could be much better explained. Further it isn't clear how the macaques could perform better than the surgeons

\* In some cases the satire might cause problems, such as the humorous suggestion that macaques should be considered to help with decision making--the dry humor might be interpreted poorly in some cultures

\* If we read this correctly and the point of this is illustrating a lack of data and evidence based information to assist surgeons in making a consistent decision, then it is worth it to consider how to drive home this point. In fact we found this humorous method of approaching this one of the more positive aspects of the study.

In your response please provide, point by point, your replies to the comments made by the reviewers and the editors, explaining how you have dealt with them in the paper.

Comments from Reviewers

Reviewer: 1

Comments:

I congratulate the authors on a thought-provoking and entertaining study.

A few minor reporting issues which they may wish to address:

1. A table with the demographics and radiographs of each of the nine cases would be helpful - I believe that many of us surgeons would wish to compare our own predictions with those of the apes, although with no great anticipation that we would fare any better than the experts involved in this study.
2. The conclusions seem unduly weighted towards the sub-group analysis of older patients. This appears to have been a post-hoc analysis and could be construed as a bias in the reporting. The authors may wish to tone down these conclusions as they detract from an otherwise methodologically sound investigation.
3. The point about conflict of interest in the ape group is well-made, but perhaps a single image is sufficient to make this case.

Additional Questions:

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Please enter your name: matthew costa

Job Title: professor of orthopaedic trauma

Institution: university of oxford

Reimbursement for attending a symposium?: No

A fee for speaking?: No

A fee for organising education?: No

Funds for research?: No

Funds for a member of staff?: No

Fees for consulting?: No

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Reviewer: 2

Comments:  
Xavier Griffin

I congratulate the authors on an engaging read and more importantly an irrevocable but important insight into the unjustifiable and diverse decision-making in the management of proximal humerus fractures. This is highlighted in the methodology of the two trials in this field - Profher 1 (completed) and Profher 2.

The agreement tests are appropriate for handling of the data. Clearly the experimental protocol itself with the macaques is intended to be amusing and seems justifiable in this setting.

Overall a cheerful spotlight on an importantly and rapidly growing area of clinical medicine where we as a community seem to be unclear about the way forwards...

Additional Questions:

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Please enter your name: Xavier Griffin

Job Title: Professor of Trauma & Orthopaedic Surgery

Institution: Queen Mary University London

Reimbursement for attending a symposium?: No

A fee for speaking?: No

A fee for organising education?: No

Funds for research?: Yes

Funds for a member of staff?: Yes

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Reviewer: 3

Comments:

The article is enjoyable to read and I think it may fit to the Christmas edition of the Journal. However, there are some issues especially in material and methods section, which needs addressing. The low number of group 2 (Barbary macaques) may lead to type II statistical error, which can be added to the limitation section. Secondly, they need to define the second group's behaviour clearer for example, what behaviour was considered as conservative management.

There is not enough explanation regarding the behaviour of Barbary macaques to conclude on their response to the treats. A couple of references would be useful on behaviour of Barbary macaques.

Was there any strategy to avoid bias related to Barbary macaques?

Additional Questions:

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Please enter your name: Levent Bayam

Job Title: Associate Professor

Institution: Sakarya University

Reimbursement for attending a symposium?: No

A fee for speaking?: No

A fee for organising education?: No

Funds for research?: No

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Reviewer: 4

Comments:

This is a well written manuscript that approaches an actual subject of controversy (management of proximal humeral fractures) in a humorous fashion. It highlights the fact that there is still quite a lot of uncertainty in the prediction of treatment and outcomes. It appears to be well conducted, given the limitations of the study design. It gives pause for thought about the actual implications for clinical care and the need for further research in the subject. I think it would be a reasonable paper to consider for the Christmas BMJ.

Additional Questions:

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Please enter your name: Paul Jenkins

Job Title: Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon

Institution: Glasgow Royal Infirmary

Reimbursement for attending a symposium?: No

A fee for speaking?: No

A fee for organising education?: No

Funds for research?: No

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