

Dear Editor-in-Chief and Reviewers,

We thank you for the time and effort spent in reviewing our manuscript and suggesting some important points to consider.

Please find below the reviewers' comments and our responses.

#### REVIEWERS' COMMENTS:

Reviewer #1 (00057695):

This meta-analysis looks at the effect of music in reducing anxiety and comfort during flexible sigmoidoscopy. The study is well conducted and clearly written. However, the number of studies analysed was small forcing you –at times- to do a meta-analysis on 2 studies only. Moreover, I would have liked you to identify the type of music played in the analysed studies and the type of conscious sedation –if any- used. Also under publication bias, it is worth mentioning that “exclusion of unpublished data is a publication bias”

**R1.1: We thank the reviewer for their comments. We agree that the number of studies was small and that this is a limitation of our study however helps the academic community to identify areas of knowledge that require further consolidation. We have mentioned this in our section on limitations to highlight this area of weakness.**

**R1.2: The types of music used in the studies have been listed in the study characteristics section of the manuscript and have also been included in the study characteristics table. We have also acknowledged this in the limitations, as the outcomes are not studied according to the type of music used. This has also been highlighted as a potential sub-group analysis for future research.**

**R1.3 As this was a meta-analysis focusing on flexible sigmoidoscopies, none of the studies used conscious sedation and we have clarified this in the manuscript.**

**R1.4 We thank the reviewer for this comment and agree with this very important and pertinent aspect to publication bias. We have mentioned this in our publication bias section.**

Reviewer #2 (00001787):

I read with interest the MS "Does music reduce anxiety and discomfort during flexible sigmoidoscopy?: a meta-analysis" by Shanmuganandan AP, and coworkers. It deals with an innovative and well developed speculation. The Authors should be commended for providing such interesting data. No suggestions on this side.

**R2.1: We thank the reviewer for their comments and encouragement.**

Reviewer #3 (00034489):

The authors show the efficacy of music for sigmoidoscopy by meta-analysis. The paper is well written and interesting. However, the authors analyzed only four papers, because there are a few papers in this area. I think the paper is suitable for the review. I recommend the authors rewrite the paper for review article.

R3.1: We thank the reviewer for their suggestion of clarifying the predominant theme of the paper. We have modified the title of our paper to reflect that this is a systematic review as well as a meta-analysis.

Reviewer #4 (00199523):

Modify the Conclusion in the ABSRACT to reflect that the study APPEARED to show benefits in reducing pain and anxiety during flexible sigmoidoscopy

R4.1: We thank the reviewer for their comment and have changed the conclusion accordingly to the following “Music appeared to benefit patients undergoing flexible sigmoidoscopies in relation to anxiety and was deemed a helpful intervention. Pain may also be reduced however further investigation is required to ascertain this.”

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude again for the insightful and encouraging comments from the reviewers.

Yours sincerely

Arun P Shanmuganandan  
(on behalf of all the authors)