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Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed the edited manuscript in Word format (file name: 25013-Revised manuscript.doc)

Dear Reviewers;

Title: Factors associated with regular dental visits among hemodialysis patients

Author: Masami Yoshioka, Yasuhiko Shirayama, Issei Imoto, Daisuke Hinode, Shizuko Yanagisawa, Yuko Takeuchi, Takashi Bando, Narushi Yokota

Thank you very much for your advices and your comments. I am sending the revised manuscript of "Factors associated with regular dental visits among hemodialysis patients" (ESPS Manuscript NO: 25013) by Masami Yoshioka *et al.*

This revision was made after carefully considering the reviewers' comments.

We showed the main correction with red in the main body of manuscript.

Reviewers' comments and our concrete answers are as follows:

Comments to Authors (Reviewed by 00731613)

The authors are requested to attend to the following queries that arose on reviewing the

manuscript.

- 1) In abstract, the conclusion states that “the present study suggest that the patients and medical practitioners need to be educated”. Since the respondents were only patients, it is not appropriate to determine the lack of awareness among physicians without evaluating their response.

>>We did not conduct the survey to medical practitioners in this study. So, we cannot determine the lack of awareness among physicians. However, we found that there were very few dialysis patients who have experienced being referred to a dentist by medical practitioners. Therefore, we concluded that medical providers are expected to participate in promoting dental visits among dialysis patients.

- 2) Modify the keywords as per the MeSH database

>>According to reviewer’s advice, we checked the keywords as per the MeSH database, and changed some keywords.

- 3) In methodology: Kindly elaborate the inclusion and exclusion criteria employed in this study.

>> According to reviewer’s advice, we added some sentences in Materials and Methods section as follows.

The inclusion criteria for this study were outpatients receiving hemodialysis treatment three times per week, and who agreed to participate in the study. Because we needed to interview patients at their bedsides, we excluded patients who had difficulty conversing independently.

- 4) Mention that institutional ethical clearance was obtained Was any kind of blinding performed?

>>The personal information obtained from interviews was anonymized, we added a sentence in Discussion section as follows.

Because the interviewer in this study was from a third party, not from a dialysis facility or a private dental clinic, and because personal information was completely anonymized, we believe that we were able to elicit patients’ opinions and thoughts without bias.

- 5) Any history of drug usage or other illnesses that may impact oral health?

>>According to reviewer's suggestion, we added some sentences in DISCUSSION section as follows.

Medical history and/or drug use can impact oral health; however, we did not investigate those parameters and therefore cannot draw conclusions on that subject. However, we found that patients with gum swelling or bleeding were much more likely to be in the group of those not receiving routine dental check-ups. This finding suggests that gingival inflammation caused by other illnesses and/or drug use might not lead to routine dental visits.

- 6) Can unemployment be considered a factor for not obtaining dental treatment? (the findings of the study shows a high rate of unemployment)

>>A high rate of unemployment might be due to the high rate of aged persons. As shown in Table 4, unemployment was not related with receiving a dental check-up. And as shown in Table 3, somebody answered "no time to go" as a reason for not seeking dental care. Therefore, we do not consider "unemployment" to be a factor for not obtaining dental treatment.

>>Finally, we added a following sentence, in Discussion section.

As shown in Table 3, some patients answered "no time to go" as a reason for not seeking dental care.

Comments to Authors (Reviewed by 00503199)

The study needs minor modifications:

- 1) Provide the total number of patients receiving dialysis in each facility.

>>According to reviewer's suggestion, we added a sentence in MATERIALS AND METHODS section as follows:

Outpatients receiving hemodialysis treatment at two dialysis facilities, one with a dental department (Facility A) and the other without (Facility B), were included in this study. The total number of patients receiving hemodialysis at Facility A was approximately 600; approximately 150 received hemodialysis at Facility B.

- 2) Provide the information if visits to the dentist are free/covered by medical insurance?

>>we added some sentences in DISCUSSION section as follows.

In Japan, most dental care is covered by medical insurance. In fact, dialysis patients are sometimes provided with additional insurance benefits. Therefore, nobody answered “economic burden” as a reason for not seeking dental care.

3) Dentate: is it the right word?

>>Yes, “dentate” is the right word.

4) Table 3: Check the rows.

>>We corrected Table 3.

We appreciate the helpful suggestions of the referee, and we hope that our revised manuscript is acceptable for publication. We are looking forward to hearing from you.

With best regards,

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