BAISHIDENG PUBLISHING GROUP INC
8226 Regency Drive, Pleasanton, CA 94588, USA
Telephone: +1-925-223-8242 Fax: +1-925-223-8243
E-mail: bpgoffice@wjgnet.com http://www.wjgnet.com

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Reply to reviewers' comments re. manuscript No 25080 (submitted to WJO), titled: Attitudes and diagnostic practice in low back pain: A qualitative study amongst Greek and British physiotherapists

We would like to thank very much all 5 reviewers for providing constructive, valuable and critical comments to our manuscript. We have made an effort to address and revise all comments made. All changes made to the manuscript are highlighted in blue. Thus, we now believe that this revised version is much more improved, addressing all reviewer' comments. Please, see responses below (numbered as in initial reviewers' document).

Reviewer 00492417

1. Re. the reason for selecting Great Britain as a comparator to Greece (instead of enrolling other countries) was mainly attributed to two reasons. Firstly, for practical purposes it was easier to conduct the study in an English-speaking country as most study's researchers were English-speaking and this, facilitated translation and the overall conduction of the survey in Britain. Secondly, as the British PT service is quite developed in terms of autonomy, it is our scope to compare diagnostic practice and attitudes with an 'evolved' PT service (as the British one). Indeed, further exploration into other countries is needed.
2. The comment "…. Approach.For in page 7 ->I apologise, but I have not understood this comment. Did you mean to add the word 'Approach' at the beginning of a paragraph, or, alter the word 'Procedure' with the word 'Approach'? I am happy to look into this, once I have more information
3. Re. statistical analysis. Statistical analysis has now been performed and presented in results and discussion sections (utilised chi-square tests) -thank you
4. Merits & limitations of research have been added in the final two paragraphs
5. I have condensed and minimised conclusion, as suggested (thank you)

Reviewer 00458932

(1) We have commented on the small number of British PTs in the final paragraph of the discussion, where we have added a limitations paragraph (thank you)
(2) Re. your comment on a possible disagreement between responses of Greek PTs on questions 1.9 & 3.1., I would like to note that these two statements are unrelated. 1.9. refers to whether each PT takes into consideration (in his assessment procedure) the doctor's diagnosis (with 42% percentage agreement), whereas, statement 3.1.refers to how diagnosis is being perceived in Greece. In 3.1., the 90,9% agreement amongst the Greek PTs indicates that within Greece, diagnosis is being perceived as an exclusive privilege for the doctors only (physiotherapists are not accepted as health professionals who could contribute to this diagnosis). Thus, there is no inconsistency on the Greek PTs' responses. However, in order to clarify this confusion, we have discussed both statements in the Discussion section. Should anything else is needed, we would be happy to review /add.
(3) We have tried to reduce all long sentences and the manuscript has been checked for grammar & syntax by an English-native speaker. So we think this version is improved.
(4) Refs 24 & 61 are now complete
(5) Re. the 42,6% agreement of the Greek PTs in the abstract -I have made clearer this sentence (thank you). Also, I have added a sentence towards the end of the Procedure section (in Methods), where I explain that none of the respondents' answer fell into the 'Neither Agree or Disagree' category. Hope these two added sentences clarify better the confusion made (thank you).

Reviewer 03596405

Thank you very much for taking the time to perform such a critical and constructive review on this qualitative-type of manuscript.

Regarding your **General Comments**
We have now conducted statistical analysis and we have altered all interpretations on results, discussion & conclusion sections. We have also added a limitations section (final paragraph of discussion). So hopefully, this improved version addresses your reported concerns. Should you have any more comments /suggestions, we are keen to look into it.

Regarding your **Specific Comments**, we have tried to answer and correct all of these. They are all corrected and indicated in blue in the text. Please, see below some additional answers to some of your points.

Introduction.
Paragraph 4 - re. your comment "*If occupation and social class were only two of several factors found to be important, why didn' t the other factors warrant discussion?*" The other factors yielded from the study were not directly related to the context of this study (i.e. sex, patient's condition etc.)

Methods

- Paragraph 5- I deleted the word 'voted' items, as it was confusing.
- Data analysis - Statistical analysis has now been performed and presented in results and discussion sections (utilised chi-square tests)

Results

- A sentence which was confusing has now been re-written

- **Discussion**

All comments made have being taken into consideration and have being reviewed; they are all highlighted in blue (thank you)

Reviewer 00501340

More emphasis has been given in the limitations of the study (thank you). In fact, a separate paragraph on limitations has been added (as this comment was highlighted by other reviewers, too).

Reviewer 02281177

The full text has been revised for grammar and syntax errors (thank you).

Thank you again for taking the time and making very important and constructive comments to this manuscript.
In anticipation of your reply.