

September 8, 2013

Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed the edited manuscript in Word format (5109-Review.doc).

Title: Distance management of inflammatory bowel disease: systematic review and meta-analysis

Author: Vivian W Huang, Krista M Reich, Richard N Fedorak

Name of Journal: *World Journal of Gastroenterology*

ESPS Manuscript NO: 5109

The manuscript has been improved according to the suggestions of reviewers:

1 Format has been updated

2 Revision has been made according to the suggestions of the reviewer

(1) Distance management was narrowly defined ... would have included non-RCTs in this to increase the number of studies reviewed.

a. Authors Response (Methods section, paragraph 2, line 4): This has been clarified in the methods section under eligibility criteria. The methodology of this review and meta-analysis was pre-determined to include non-RCTs only if there were insufficient RCTs to analyze, since ideally RCTs and non-RCTs should not be combined together when analyzing outcomes and conducting meta-analyses.

(2) Useful if the authors provided some additional information in the Study Characteristics. Even though fewer clinic visits might free up resources for new/other patients, are there any risks to reducing clinic visits for patients?

a. Authors Response (Results section, paragraph 2, lines 5-7/ paragraph 4, lines 3-5/ paragraph 5, lines 2-5): Additional information for each study has been included in the study characteristics.

b. Authors Response (Discussion section, paragraph 4, lines 1-2): Fewer clinic visits could

theoretically lead to higher relapse rates and higher admission rates. These two potential risks were also studied in this systematic review and meta-analysis, and there were no significant changes.

(3) Given that this review focuses on quality-of-life as a primary outcome, it may be pertinent to state the reason that manuscripts concentrating on stress and lifestyle management were excluded. Did these reports lack “distance” management, or was “distance” management limited to stress and lifestyle techniques. Please clarify.

- a. Authors Response (Methods section, paragraph 2, line 4/ paragraph 3, line 3 and 5): We have attempted to clarify this in the methods section. This review and meta-analysis was aimed to look at distance management methods that incorporate patient self-management techniques whereby the patient interacts remotely via a self-guided management program or electronic interface, and actively adjusts medications or self-directs open access to clinic follow up. Studies that included interventions that only involved improving patient education or managing stress and lifestyle, but had no self-management and no distance management component were excluded. These would be a different topic for further study.

3 References and typesetting were corrected

Thank you again for publishing our manuscript in the *World Journal of Gastroenterology*.

Sincerely yours,



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