

## **Author's response to reviews**

**Title:** Assessing the order of magnitude of outcomes in single-arm cohorts through systematic comparison with corresponding cohorts: An example from the AMOS study

### **Authors:**

Harald J Hamre ([harald.hamre@ifaemm.de](mailto:harald.hamre@ifaemm.de))  
Anja Glockmann ([anja.glockmann@ifaemm.de](mailto:anja.glockmann@ifaemm.de))  
Wilfried Troger ([troeger@crdt.de](mailto:troeger@crdt.de))  
Gunver S Kienle ([gunver.kienle@ifaemm.de](mailto:gunver.kienle@ifaemm.de))  
Helmut Kiene ([helmut.kiene@ifaemm.de](mailto:helmut.kiene@ifaemm.de))

**Version:** 4 **Date:** 18 February 2008

**Author's response to reviews:** see over

**MS: 1931899617151355 Assessing the order of magnitude of outcomes. Response to reviewers' comments on revised manuscript**

Harald J. Hamre, 18 February 2008

<b>Reviewer Wolfgang Weidenhammer</b>		
<b>Reviewer's report</b>	<b>Our response</b>	<b>Manuscript changes</b>
1. The latest version of the manuscript has been clearly improved in most aspects. The additional analyses (sensitivity analyses) as well as the statements on limitations are a valuable contribution to the conclusiveness of the methodological approach. Unfortunately this comes along with the impression that it might be a little bit more difficult for the reader to follow the essential line. But due to the complexity I'm afraid that this has to be accepted as it is.	We agree with this.	
<b>Minor Essential Revisions</b>	<b>Our response</b>	<b>Manuscript changes</b>
2. Abstract, Conclusions: I have doubts in which way the results argue for the conclusion that SF-36 is a useful outcome measure for AM.	We think this conclusion follows from the preceding statement that the comparisons suggest that improvements in health status following anthroposophic therapy can be clinically meaningful. On the other hand, the conclusion is not central to this paper and hence dispensable.	We have deleted this conclusion in the Abstract and in the Discussion.

<p>3. Methods, page 3: I suggest to delete the words in parentheses (the languages understood ...). This should be taken for granted if you decide to include these languages.</p>		<p>We have deleted these words.</p>
<p>4. Results, page 6, first paragraph: (Table 1, Additional file 2) is confusing. Better (Table 1, for details see also additional file 2).</p>		<p>We have inserted these words.</p>
<p>5. 4th paragraph: The 85 C-cohorts... correct? or 84 cohorts?</p>	<p>Thank you for pointing out this error. Also, by an error two C-cohorts from Spain had not been listed in this sentence.</p>	<p>The sentence has been corrected: 84 C-cohorts ... Spain (n = 2)</p>
<p>6. After Discussion section include a short Conclusions section. At the end of the paper readers expect a main message (like in the abstract).</p>	<p>We are happy to follow this suggestion. We have used the same sentences as in the Abstract/Conclusion.</p>	<p>Added Conclusions: "In this descriptive analysis, anthroposophic therapy was associated with SF-36 improvements largely of the same order of magnitude as improvements following other treatments. Although these non-concurrent comparisons cannot assess comparative effectiveness, they suggest that improvements in health status following anthroposophic therapy can be clinically meaningful. The analysis also demonstrates the value of a systematic approach when comparing a therapy cohort to corresponding therapy cohorts."</p>
<p>7. Table 2: '50-per' '25-per' should be explained in the legend (or in the list of abbreviations).</p>		<p>We have changed '50-per' to Median and explained '25-per' and '75-per' in the table legend.</p>

<p>8. Table 4: The percentages in each row do not add up to 100%. Please check for this or give explanations.</p>	<p>Thank you for pointing out this. The percentages in this table were not correct, while the numbers were correct. We have checked again all numbers and percentages in Tables 1-7 and in the entire Results section, and identified and corrected some small errors (mostly due to successive truncation, eg 2.46→2.5→3 instead of 2.46→2). None of these corrections led to a change in the interpretation of results.</p>	<p>Table 4: All percentages have been corrected. Results/Sensitivity analyses: "...the proportion of comparisons with minimal-to-small differences remained unchanged at 80%" has been corrected to "...the proportion ...was increased to 88%" Other corrections were too minor to be listed here.</p>
<p><b>Reviewer Sunita Vohra</b></p>		
<p><b>Reviewer's report</b></p>	<p><b>Our response</b></p>	<p><b>Manuscript changes</b></p>
<p>9. I am satisfied that my concerns have been addressed by the authors.</p>		