

## Letter regarding “Meta-analysis of 18F-FDG PET/CT in the diagnosis of infective endocarditis”

### To the Editor,

I read with great interest the article by Mahmood et al. entitled “Meta-analysis of 18F-FDG PET/CT in the diagnosis of infective endocarditis”.<sup>1</sup> As this modality gains increasing traction in the setting of endocarditis in general and prosthetic heart valve endocarditis in particular, we are reminded that our evidence (or perhaps lack thereof) comes from studies with relatively low numbers of patients, limiting their strength and compounding the effects of their limitations. In this light, meta-analysis is a very valuable tool to collate the available data into a single representation.

When discussing heterogeneity, the authors pointed out that exclusion of the study by Jiménez-Ballvé et al.<sup>2</sup> led to a decrease in heterogeneity. When looking at the values reported in the article for this study, I was surprised to find that the specificity is reported differently

in Table 1 (28%), Table 2 (73%), and in Figure 2 (19%). When comparing the values available in the article with the values reported in the original publications, further discrepancies become apparent (Table 1).

The values for Granados et al.<sup>3</sup> and Jiménez-Ballvé et al.<sup>2</sup> are most peculiar as they not only differ from the originally published values, but also vary within the article by Mahmood et al.

How do the authors account for these variations? I have been unable to find an explanation in the article itself, and especially in the case of the study by Jiménez-Ballvé et al.<sup>2</sup> the difference between the value reported in the original publication and the value reportedly used for the pooled specificity calculation in Figure 2 is worryingly large at 73 versus 19%, and combined with the many smaller discrepancies I find it difficult to trust the final pooled calculations.

**Table 1.** Comparison between reported values

|                     | Value given in original publication | Mahmood et al. |          |         |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------|---------|
|                     |                                     | Table 1        | Figure 2 | Table 2 |
| <b>Sensitivity</b>  |                                     |                |          |         |
| Camargo 2013        | N/A                                 | 83             | 83       | N/A     |
| Chirillo 2014       | 87                                  | 87             | 87       | N/A     |
| Fagman 2015         | 75                                  | 67             | 67       | N/A     |
| Granados 2016       | 82                                  | 61             | 77       | 91      |
| Graziosi 2014       | 63                                  | 67             | 67       | 67      |
| Jimenez-Ballvé 2016 | 100                                 | 100            | 100      | 100     |
| Patel 2016          | 50                                  | 50             | 50       | N/A     |
| Pizzi 2015          | 87                                  | 89             | 89       | N/A     |
| Ricciardi 2014      | 55                                  | 64             | 64       | 64      |
| Rouzet 2014         | 93                                  | 83             | 83       | N/A     |
| Saby 2013           | 73                                  | 62             | 62       | N/A     |
| Salomäki 2017       | N/A                                 | 56             | 56       | N/A     |
| Zhang-Yin 2016      | 92                                  | 92             | 92       | N/A     |
| <b>Specificity</b>  |                                     |                |          |         |
| Camargo 2013        | N/A                                 | 73             | 73       | N/A     |
| Chirillo 2014       | 67                                  | 67             | 67       | N/A     |
| Fagman 2015         | 84                                  | 100            | 100      | N/A     |
| Granados 2016       | 96                                  | 94             | 96       | 94      |
| Graziosi 2014       | 86                                  | 87             | 87       | 87      |
| Jimenez-Ballvé 2016 | 73                                  | 28             | 19       | 73      |
| Patel 2016          | 83                                  | 83             | 83       | N/A     |
| Pizzi 2015          | 92                                  | 84             | 84       | N/A     |
| Ricciardi 2014      | 100                                 | 100            | 100      | 100     |
| Rouzet 2014         | 71                                  | 71             | 71       | N/A     |
| Saby 2013           | 80                                  | 80             | 80       | N/A     |
| Salomäki 2017       | N/A                                 | 80             | 60       | N/A     |
| Zhang-Yin 2016      | 77                                  | 77             | 77       | N/A     |

**Disclosure**

*Asbjørn M. Scholtens has nothing to disclose.*

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**References**

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