

Response to Reviewer 4 Comments

Point 1: Intro can be still be elaborated to assert more on need of the study.

Response 1: We thank the reviewer for this comment, and we have further elaborated on the need for study in the Introduction section:

Introduction (line 72): To our knowledge, people's self-reported adherence to offloading treatment among people with DFU has not been tested for validity or reliability. Assessment of validity and reliability of self-reported scales of offloading adherence should guide researchers to know if they can rely on using self-reporting measures and potentially the aforementioned challenges associated with objective measures of adherence. Furthermore, clinicians should be informed if they can use their patients' self-reports of adherence as a valid source of assessing adherence to prescribed offloading treatments in clinical practice. Thus, this study aimed to assess the validity and reliability of self-reported adherence to using removable cast walker (RCW) offloading among people with DFUs.

Point 2: In table 1 I see 53 participants but I see only 48 with neuropathy and rest with PAD, is it truly reflecting a population suffering from the diabetes related complication.

Response 2: We thank the reviewer for the valuable comment. As the reviewer points out we found 48 (90%) of participants had neuropathy which aligns with most larger cohorts, such as the Zhang et al paper that also found 86% of n=4709 participants in a larger real-world prospective cohort had neuropathy. This finding is also similar in other large cohorts. Therefore, from our perspective, our cohort is representative or reflective of large real-world cohorts.

Zhang Y, Cramb S, McPhail SM, Pacella R, van Netten JJ, Cheng Q, et al. Multiple factors predict longer and shorter time-to-ulcer-free in people with diabetes-related foot ulcers: survival analyses of a large prospective cohort followed-up for 24-months. *Diabetes Research and Clinical Practice*. 2022;185:109239.

Point 3: Figure 1 scatter plot the authors says for 53 participants but actual participants seem to be 49. Can you please recheck and clarify?

Response 3: We thank the reviewer for this note. We have re-checked the study data and figures and identified that some participants share the same levels of subjective and objective adherence (i.e., 100\49.3, 100\ 50.5, 90\50, 90\49.8). Thus, when that data are presented on the scatter plot, those participants share visually nearly the same point resulting in it seeming like fewer numbers on the plot (i.e., 49) when in fact there is actually the entire sample size presented (n=53).

Point 4: Figure 2 also represents data from 49 individuals

Response 4: We again thank the reviewer and refer to the same explanation above that is also applied here.

Point 5: How was the sample size calculated , kindly clarify

Response 5: We thank the reviewer for this comment and for allowing us to clarify in the text. Our study was a secondary analysis of our original main study exploring adherence to using RCWs. We have now added sentences on our sample size was calculated for our original main study and why this was appropriate for our secondary analysis:

“We used data from 53 eligible participants from a larger study whom both self-reported adherence and had their adherence objectively measured to test validity (16, 28). The sample size calculation of the larger study was based on five factors being included in a final multiple linear regression model with a minimum of 10 participants needed for each included factor and accounting for a 5-10% dropout rate (16). The original sample was considered large enough for this validity study and a subset of 20 participants were asked to self-report adherence again at a second visit to test reliability based on the sample size needed for appropriate interval estimation for Cohen’s kappa (31).

Point 6: Optional : I feel the authors can add highlights to the study to put there points or can add a graphical abstract

Response 6: We thank the reviewer for the kind suggestion. We agree that adding highlights may be helpful to surmise the key findings for the reader. However, we are not sure if this aligns with the journal’s requirements for authors and had not noticed any highlights section in the journal’s guide for authors.