

Response to Reviewer 1 Comments

Point 1: This study has a design flaw. The impact of Tocilizumab on radiological changes can not be adequately analyzed without a control group not receiving the drug.

Response 1: Thank you for this suggestion. While it would have been interesting to explore this further, our study focuses on retrospectively assessing and comparing disease progression within subgroups of patients receiving TOC. Patients not receiving TOC would have likely had a different presentation, progression and their follow-up would be slightly out of the scope of our observational retrospective study. When we compared patients who received TOC with the 86 severe patients who did not receive TOC (excluded from this analysis), the TOC group was far more severe, so there is no control group that could be matched. In addition, these patients did not have control CT scans.

Point 2: The proposed timing of Tocilizumab administration based on oxygen flow rate is interesting but undoubtedly requires a more detailed statistical analysis to convince the readers.

Response 2: Following this suggestion, we have included in the analysis a calculation according to the FiO₂. This has a cut-off which correlates to the oxygen flow cut-off.