Let's read the letter together, focusing on the key points and the authors' responses. The letter discusses the impact of window rooms on critically ill patients admitted to the ICU with subarachnoid hemorrhage, and it questions the data analysis and interpretation. The authors also acknowledge the potential importance of natural light for quality care of critically ill patients, especially in terms of minimizing circadian rhythm disruptions. They highlight the need for prospective designs and randomized trials to explore the role of natural light in improving the outcomes of critically ill patients.

Authors' response

Hannah Wunsch, Hayley Gershengorn, Stephan A Mayer and Jan Claassen

We appreciate the thoughtful comments and queries of Zhang and Wu. We agree that there are many potential analyses that might result in identification of benefit (or harm) in specific subgroups of patients. However, we limited our analyses to the subgroups we had chosen a priori due to the size of the cohort [1]. In particular, we chose not to stratify patients into smaller subgroups, such as individual Hunt–Hess scores, because the resulting groups would then be inadequately powered to identify reasonable differences in outcomes. We appreciate the suggestion regarding stratification by aneurysmal and nonaneurysmal etiology, and in post hoc analyses we did not find any difference in our primary outcomes of the modified Rankin Scale at hospital discharge, at 3 months and at 1 year.

The question of the effect of light on critically ill patients is complex. We are clearly only at the beginning of exploratory analyses both to identify appropriate patient groups for study and to understand the mechanisms of action of light in the human body during critical illness. Current analyses are limited by available data and we hope that future studies may allow for prospective design, including randomized trials, to examine this important issue.

Abbreviations

ICU, intensive care unit.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.
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