

with *H pylori* related diseases differed from the *H pylori* negative subgroup they have studied.

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Reply

EDITOR,—We appreciate the interesting comments of Dr Jane Andrews on our article. Her letter touches an important problem: the presence of *H pylori* in the samples analysed and its relation with surface hydrophobicity.¹

In fact, *H pylori* infection, the main cause of chronic gastritis and ulcer disease, can modify the phospholipid composition² and the gastric surfactant hydrophobicity^{1,3} because of the presence of the bacterial phospholipase A.⁴

Our study was, therefore, deliberately restricted to a selected subgroup of patients without histological evidence of gastric *H pylori* infection. We agree that an additional study needs to be done in a population that includes subjects with *H pylori* infection. We are in the process of performing such a study. The evaluation of the available data shows that *H pylori* infection induces significant variations of gastric phospholipid in the *H pylori* negative subgroup.² We believe this confirms that our

methodology is valid for the biochemical analysis of gastrointestinal mucosal samples.

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