Author's response to reviews

Title: Transmissibility and temporal changes of 2009 pH1N1 pandemic during summer and fall/winter waves

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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Dear Editor:

Attached please find the final version of the manuscript entitled “Transmissibility and Temporal Changes of 2009 pH1N1 Pandemic during Summer and Fall/Winter Waves” ready for publication in *BMC Infectious Disease*.

We have made revisions with each of the major and minor revisions listed. Please do not hesitate to contact me if there are any further questions. I shall look forward to hearing from you in due time.

Sincerely yours,

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Response to Reviewers’ Comments

Reviewer 1
1. The surveillance protocols in Taiwan remained essentially the same throughout the data period since, by the time the data were starting to be collected at the end of June, clinical characteristics of the pH1N1 infection had already been well understood from the spring outbreaks around the world. A note to this effect has been added in the Methods section.

2. Indeed, we had implied implicitly but never mentioned explicitly, that the lower estimates of R for the second wave and for the school closing data might be attributable to the possible effects of school closings after September. A clearer remark to this effect has been added in the Discussion section.

    We also added the followings discussion on our estimate for R:
    “Transmissibility of the fist pH1N1 wave in Taiwan during the summer in July-September, as measured by R, was lower than that of the earlier spring outbreak in North America [20, 26, 29-30] and Europe [31], most likely, at least in part, due to decreased social contacts among the population triggered by public awareness of the earlier, well-publicized outbreaks in Mexico and North America as well as the subsequent preemptive government campaign to reduce transmissions. It was also lower than that of the winter outbreak in the Southern Hemisphere around the same time [19, 32-33], perhaps attributable to the fact that it was the winter influenza season in the Southern Hemisphere.”

Reviewer 2

The reviewer’s point is valid. We have revised the relevant discussion as follows: “the temporal trends of the two time series might not be closely comparable. However, the cumulative curves in Figures 2 and 3 indicate some similarity in the temporal trends of the cumulative data, mainly in the form of the turning points.”

    We do believe Figures 2 and 3 serve the purpose of comparison in this case, albeit using the cumulative curves. I also agree that this comparison is implicitly made in Figure 4.

The authors are again grateful to the reviewers for their insightful comments and suggestions which improved this manuscript.