Author's response to reviews

Title: Expatriates ill after travel: Results from the GeoSentinel surveillance network

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Author's response to reviews: see over
24 September 2012

BMC Infectious Disease
Dear Editors:

Re: MS 1382312143733596
Expatriates ill after travel: Results from the GeoSentinel surveillance network

Thank you for your response to our manuscript. We appreciate the thoughtful comments from both reviewers, and have revised our manuscript to address the points raised.

We attach on the next page a detailed point-by-point response to the revisions suggested, and hope this will be acceptable.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this manuscript.

Yours truly,
Poh Lian Lim, MD, MPH
Reviewer 1: Miguel Cabada

Reviewer's report:
We appreciate the points raised by Reviewer 1. In the Discussion section (Pages 12-13, second last paragraph), we had highlighted the limitations of our analysis, including under-representation of mild illnesses, illness with short duration or short incubation periods, and illnesses not presenting to travel clinics or infectious disease tertiary care centers.

Major Compulsory Revisions
1) We have re-defined the “non-expatriates” group in the Methods section, as requested.

2) As requested by the reviewer, we have re-analyzed our data. The findings comparing business expatriates vs business non-expatriates, and volunteer expatriates vs volunteer non-expatriates are presented in Table 2.

3) We have expanded the discussion of the adjusted Odds Ratio results, in the Discussion section, last paragraph, Page 13.

Minor Essential Revisions
1) Page 7, 1st paragraph:
We have made the change as requested: “14,793 business and volunteer travelers visited GeoSentinel sites…”

2) Page 8, Results Section:
We have deleted text referring to Table 4 in Results section (page 8).

3) Page 10, 1st paragraph:
We have deleted the duplicate reference 9.

4) Page 10, paragraph 2:
The discussion in this paragraph is to set the findings of our study within the broader context of existing literature about malaria and prophylaxis in expatriates. As the second reviewer has not suggested deleting the entire paragraph, we have opted to keep this paragraph.

5) We have deleted Reference 18, as requested.

6) We have deleted the comparison to Reference 1 in the Discussion section, because it is not a valid direct comparison, as the reviewer correctly pointed out.

7) Page 12, paragraph 3:
We have modified the Discussion about enteric fever, as suggested.
**Reviewer 2: Bryan Spencer**

**Major Compulsory Revisions**
1) We have amended the phrases where proportionate morbidity would be misinterpreted as risk, and explicitly outlined the limitations in our methodology, as requested:
   a) Discussion, paragraph 5
   b) Discussion, paragraph 6
   c) Discussion, paragraph 9
   d) Abstract

**Minor Essential Revisions**
1) Statistical Methods:
   We have added more detail on how adjusted odds ratios were derived, as requested by the reviewer.

2) Page 8, Results Section:
   We have deleted text referring to Table 4 in Results section (page 8).

3) Discussion Section, Paragraph 4:
   We have re-phrased the sentence appropriately to reflect the study mentioned.

**Discretionary Revisions**
1) Discussion, 1st paragraph:
   We have re-phrased the confusing last clause of the last sentence to read more clearly.

2) Introduction, 1st paragraph, last sentence:
   We have re-phrased the sentence for clarity, as suggested.

3) The definition of “expatriate” used in GeoSentinel was adopted after much discussion. While our definition of expatriate may seem overly narrow and may limit generalizability, the converse problem of an overly broad definition resulted in extremely
heterogenous populations. We have maintained this definition for the sake of more robust and rigorous analysis.

4) We will add the alternate interpretation for expatriates having lower proportionate morbidity for acute diarrheal illness.