Author's response to reviews

Title: Natural Prevalence of Antibodies to Spike Proteins of Four Non-SARS Human Coronaviruses Among a General Population in Beijing

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Responses to Reviewers’ Comments

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

The statistical methods section does not describe the methods used in the manuscript. The description of the results should be stated in terms of the p-value for the F test in the ANOVA along with group differences as detected by using Tukey’s method.

A: Thanks! We revised the statistical methods section in line 160-166 as “Statistical analysis was performed using the Statistic Package for Social Science (SPSS) statistic 17 package with #2-test and Fisher’s exact test. Differences between the mean values of each groups were considered significant at p < 0.05 when assessed using Tukey’s test.”

The authors have also failed to address the statistical error noted by another reviewer regarding differences in rates among the 8 study participants that are less than 1 year of age.

A: Thanks! We followed this suggestion and deleted the statement regarding differences in rates that are less than 1 year of age in line 203-206 and 308-310 since the number of study participants is two small (only 8).

Also, now that p-values are supplied it is clear that some of the differences described as “not significant” actually have a p-value less than 0.05 (for example, p=0.043), so that needs to be addressed.

A: Thanks! This is a typo. We addressed the comment in line 213-214 as “no significant differences were observed with regard to IgG to two novel HCoVs among the children (NL63, p=0.051; HKU1, p=0.329).”