Author's response to reviews

Title: Serum complement C4b, fibronectin, and prolidase are associated with the pathological changes of pulmonary tuberculosis

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

We have revised the manuscript in accordance with the reviewers’ comments. Here below is our description on revision according to the reviewers’ comments:

**Reviewer 2:**

**Comment 1:** The one remaining major issue is with table 2. The authors have essentially assumed the midpoint between upper and lower limits of the normal range to be the median. This assumes the data used to describe the "normal" range are distributed normally. In all likelihood, they are not - they probably are skewed just as are the patient data. Without actually knowing what the median of the normal range is, the statistics cannot be calculated as the authors have done.

**Response 1:** The median we compared to was the median of upper and lower limits after taking the logarithm, and not the midpoint between upper and lower limits of the normal range. In order to clarify this, we have added the “Median” values in Table 2.

**Comment 2:** The language of the new material needs to be improved.

**Response 2:** We have revised the whole manuscript to improve the language.

**Comment 3:** Please check that you have clearly stated what all the numbers are in each of the tables (e.g. whether data are numbers, means, medians, SDs, IQRs, 95% CIs etc).
Response 3: We have reworded the manuscript, and clearly stated all the numbers in each of the tables.

Additional Editor:

Comment 1: The authors must carefully reword their manuscript. They have simply assessed the association between concentrations of various serum proteins and the pathological changes of TB. It is inappropriate to infer causality when this has not been proven. (e.g. Page 3, line 3.)

Response 1: We have changed the sentence to ‘Mycobacterium tuberculosis infection can activate the immune system, leading to characteristic pathological changes such as inflammatory granuloma, caseous necrosis, and cavity formation.’

Comment 2: Page 3, line 21. Better stated as 'are associated with'.

Response 2: We have replaced the words ‘may indicate’ to 'are associated with'.

Comment 3: Page 5, line 3 and line 20. Suggest change 'can indicate' to 'may be associated with'

Response 3: We have changed the words 'can indicate' to 'may be associated with'.

Comment 4: Page 13, line 15. Suggest change 'indicate' to 'associated with' in both places.

Response 4: We have replaced the words ‘indicate’ to 'be associated with'. 
Comment 5: Page 10, line 17. I am not sure that you have demonstrated 'liver damage' rather than just reduced synthetic function of the liver. This must be reworded here and elsewhere.

Response 5: We have reworded this part to “indicating that the reduction of liver synthetic function, and the activation of immune and complement systems occurred in the early stage of PTB.”

Thank you for the kind advice.

A list of changes:

1. Page 3, line 3
2. Page 3, line 13
3. Page 3, line 21
4. Page 5, line 3
5. Page 5, line 20
6. Page 7, line 8
7. Page 9, lines 1-2
8. Page 9, lines 11-12
9. Page 10, lines 16-17
10. Page 11, lines 13-14
11. Page 11, line 18
Sincerely yours,

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