Author's response to reviews

Title: Molecular and Epidemiologic Analysis of a County-Wide Outbreak Caused by Salmonella enterica subsp. enterica serovar Enteritidis Traced to a Bakery

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Re: 1838477155273488 - Molecular and Epidemiologic Analysis of a County-Wide Outbreak Caused by Salmonella enterica subsp. enterica serovar Enteritidis Traced to a Bakery

Dear Editors,

A point-by-point response to the peer reviews of our original manuscript, #1838477155273488, is presented in this reply letter according to the editors’ suggestion. All authors have read and agreed to the re-submitted version of the manuscript. The reviewers’ queries and suggestions are addressed item by item as follows, highlighted in Bold format:

Reviewer Meirion Evans

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Abstract
Rephrase Results paragraph as follows:
'During the week of the outbreak, 34 of 162 patients with gastroenteritis were positive for Salmonella, and 28 of these 34 cases reported eating the same kind of bread. In total, 28 of 34 patients who ate this bread were positive for salmonella compared to only 6 of 128 people who did not eat this bread (RR: 17.6, 95%CI 7.9-39.0, P < 0.001).'

Methods
P.5, line 5: 'Patients' for 'cases'
P.5, line 17: 'A patient' for 'patients'
P.6, line 2: rephrase 'to test the hypothesis that illness was caused by a specific food.'
Results
P.9, para 2: 'patients' for 'cases'
- THE TERM CASES SHOULD BE RESERVED FOR PATIENTS WHO MEET THE CASE DEFINITION
P.10, para 2: 'investigation' for 'surveillance'
P.10, para 2: Combine and rephrase penultimate two sentences as follows:
'In total, 28 of 34 patients who ate this bread were positive for salmonella compared to only 6 of 128 people who did not eat this bread (RR: 17.6, 95%CI 7.9-39.0, P < 0.001).'
P.11, para 2: 'investigation' for 'surveillance'

*** We have corrected accordingly.

Reviewer Anja Siitonen
General
The manuscript is mostly descriptive and does not contain much new, as stated previously. It is also lengthy; this has also been stated previously by both reviewers. Therefore, the authors should have at least tried to shorten the text. However, no attempts to do that cannot be seen; the results section in this third version is even longer than in the former version. In addition, it was frustrating that when the authors had corrected a mistake in one point of the manuscript the same mistake still emerged in some other point of the manuscript.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. Patients
1.1. Page 10, line 15. The last part of the sentence can be deleted; the data that 16 patients were female can be derived from the first part of the sentence.
1.2. Page 10, lines 14 – 19. Use the word “patient(s)” instead of “case(s)”.
1.3. Page 11, first paragraph. The data concerning clinical chemistry can be deleted.

*** We have corrected accordingly.

2. Bacterial strains (starting from page 12)
2.1. This section of the results was more concisely written in the previous version of this manuscript. Now, some of the sentences are not understandable. For example, by Among 34 patients receiving blood culture, two patients’ blood samples grew S. Enteritidis, the authors probably mean that S. Enteritidis grew in two of the 34 patients’ blood cultures.
2.2. Page 12. The first sentence in the last paragraph does not belong to results of this study; the authors may use this data for example in the Background section.

*** We have tried to shorten this part and corrected accordingly.

3. English language of the manuscript needs to be revised.

*** The manuscript is reviewed by a local English editing company.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
1. The correct use of italics in the name of Salmonella Enteritidis should be checked throughout the manuscript, also in figures. This is now the third complaint about the same issue!

*** The use of “Salmonella Enteritidis” in the manuscript is according to the described designation in Brenner FW, Villar RG, Angulo FJ, Tauxe R, Swaminathan B. Salmonella nomenclature. J Clin Microbiol. 2000 Jul;38(7):2465-7. We would like to change the current designation to another designation if we know what designation is familiar and suitable for the readers of the journal.

2. Figure 2. The authors have removed the markers from the figure, as suggested. They should also delete the corresponding text from the figure legend.

*** We have corrected accordingly.

3. The misspellings, for example - In page 5, twp should be two
- In page 5, Salmonlla should be Salmonella
- In page 16, Enteritiditis should be Enteritidis should be corrected throughout the manuscript, also in references.

*** We apologize for the typographic errors and have corrected accordingly. Regarding to the designation of Salmonella in the references, we just follow the original designation of each reference.

Many thanks to both reviewers’ kindly instructive suggestions and corrections.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. L. K. Siu Ph.D., FIBMS(U.K)