Author's response to reviews

Title: Tuberculosis Associated with Mycobacterium tuberculosis Beijing and Non-Beijing Genotypes: A Clinical and Immunological Comparison

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Dear Dr Simpson,

Thank you very much for your editorial work, and we also thank the reviewers, Drs Gunnar Aksel A Bjune and Maxim Filipenko, for their valuable comments and suggestions.

In light of the two reviewers' suggestions, 1) the conclusions of the study have been revised (please refer to the revised manuscript, page 3 paragraph 1 and page 17 paragraph 1); 2) the discussion on that our Beijing isolates and those in other study, such as in Drobniewski et al., JAMA 2005, 293: 2726, may belong to different sub-Beijing families has been made as suggested by Dr Maxim Filipenko (page 14 paragraph 1, the last 2 sentences).

In addition, 3) IL-13 gene expression levels are low in unstimulated PBMCs of tuberculosis patients (please see reference Seah et al., The Journal of Infectious Diseases 2000, 181:385). The quantitative real-time PCR kit used in our study may be not sensitive enough to detect it. Because the kit used in this study is commercially obtained, the manufacturer does not reveal any more information; 4) we agree with Dr Maxim Filipenko that the study would be more informative if including other Th2 markers.

Looking forward to your favorable reply.

Best wishes,
Yong-Jiang Sun