Author’s response to reviews

Title: Clinical Characteristics of the Autumn-Winter Type Scrub Typhus Cases in South of Shandong Province, Northern China

Authors:

Yunxi Liu (Yunxiliu6511@yahoo.com.cn)
Dan Feng (fddd@263.net)
Jijiang Suo (si191919@yahoo.com.cn)
Yubin Xing (quanjun2000@yahoo.com.cn)
Gang Liu (liugangfever@sohu.com)
Lihua Liu (llh150@vip.sina.com)
Hongju Xiao (xiaohongjufever@sohu.com)
Ning Jia (Jianing@263.net)
Yan Gao (Gaoy301@sina.com)
Hong Yang (anii_yang@yahoo.com)
Shuqing Zuo (Zuoshq@yahoo.com.cn)
Panhe Zhang (juntianz@yahoo.com.cn)
Zhongtang Zhao (ztzhao@sdu.edu.cn)
Jingsi Min (jingsiminfx@sohu.com)
Peitian Feng (peitianfengfx@sohu.com)
Shubin Ma (shubinmaf@sohu.com)
Song Liang (sliang@cph.osu.edu)
Wuchun Cao (caowc@nic.bmi.ac.cn)

Version: 4 Date: 7 May 2009

Author’s response to reviews: see over
**Mark Todd**  
*Assistant Editor*  
*BMC-series Journals*  
*BioMed Central*  
*Middlesex House*  
*34-42 Cleveland Street*  
*London W1T 4LB*

May 6, 2009

**RE: MS: 390591632295992**  
“Clinical Characteristics of the Autumn-Winter Type Scrub Typhus Cases in South of Shandong Province, Northern China” by Yunxi Liu et al.

Dear Dr. Todd,

We are pleased to re-submit the enclosed manuscript for publication in the *BMC Infectious Disease*. The title of our (revised) manuscript is: “Clinical Characteristics of the Autumn-Winter Type Scrub Typhus Cases in South of Shandong Province, Northern China”.

We greatly appreciate the two reviewers’ comments on our manuscript submitted previously. In light of their suggestions, we have revised the paper accordingly. Enclosed are a point-by-point response to reviewers’ comments and the revised manuscript.

We thank you for considering the manuscript and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Yunxi Liu, MD, PhD

Enclosures:  
1. A point-by-point response sheet.  
2. Revised manuscript (clean version).
Reviewer 1's report
Title: Clinical Characteristics of the Autumn-Winter Type Scrub Typhus Cases in South of Shandong Province, Northern China

Version: 3 Date: 8 April 2009

Reviewer: KRIANGKRAI LERDTHUSNEE

Reviewer's report:

1. The MS had been improved from the original draft.

Reply: Thank you for your kind comments.

2. For this latest draft I believed it is publishable. There were few editing changes /corrections I made (see the file).
However, I thought that the discussion part needs to be rewritten to make it better when read. This part should be brief, precise and informative, rather than repeating the results. As I made my comments (see the file) that there were many sentences in discussion part which the authors copied from the result’s text. These were redundancy.
As for the general rule, result is result, discussion is what the authors discuss about their results in relation to other research works, basic knowledge, principle & logic, etc., but it should not repeat the results again. If the authors agree to revise their discussion part, it would make this MS acceptable.

Reply: Thank you for your kind comments. We agree to the reviewer's comments. We have deleted the sentences in discussion section that copied from the result’s section. We also have further improved our discussion section in light of the reviewer's suggestion.

Reviewer 2's report
Title: Clinical Characteristics of the Autumn-Winter Type Scrub Typhus Cases in South of Shandong Province, Northern China

Version: 3 Date: 8 April 2009

Reviewer: Motohiko Ogawa

Reviewer's report:

1. The revised manuscript well described The Autumn-Winter Type of Scrub typhus in China and highlight its specific features.
Reply: Thank you for your kind comments.

2. I understand Kawasaki type is very similar to the detected strains (but not same) and major in Shandong province. I recommend that you should establish Chinese isolates of *O.tsutsugamushi* and used them for serological diagnosis in near future. **So I wondered why you did not use the original isolates for the serological diagnosis.**

Reply: We appreciate the reviewer’s very good suggestion. Indeed, we tried and had an unsuccessful attempt to establish Chinese isolates of *O. tsutsugamushi* using chicken embryo and Vero cells. We are still working on this and trying to resolve challenges encountered.

3. About CRP and others. I understand the situation. I hope that more medical investigation would be done to understand specific clinical features of the Autumn-Winter Type Scrub typhus.

Reply: Again, thanks for this good suggestion. In our future work, we are planning to collect some important biochemical parameters associated with each case. These parameters may include C-reacting protein (CRP), hemoglobin (Hb) level, erythrocyte sedimentation rate, prothrombin time (PT), activated partial thromboplastin time (APTT), and blood urea nitrogen (BUN), creatinine, aspartate aminotransferase (AST), alanine aminotransferase (ALT), alkaline phosphatase (ALP), total bilirubin, and albumin (ALB) levels et al. We hope that, through these comprehensive efforts, we’ll have a better understanding of the specific clinical features of the Autumn-Winter type scrub typhus in northern China.