Author's response to reviews

Title: Promising treatment outcomes of intensity-modulated radiation therapy for nasopharyngeal carcinoma patients with N0 disease according to the seventh edition of the AJCC staging system

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Version: 4 Date: 11 January 2012

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editors,

Thank you very much for your kind decision and reviewer’s comments for our manuscript. We have now revised our manuscript according to the reviewer’s comments. The following is our point-by-point response to the comments. We have also re-submitted the revised manuscript. The changes in the revised manuscript are highlighted in a red font with underlining to make your review easier.

Yours faithfully,

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We addressed the comments of the reviewer (Frank Wong) as follow:

1. Just one comment from me.

P.13 Survival of N0 disease according to AJCC T-classification “In T1N0, T2N0, T3N0 and T4N0 disease, the OS rates and DSS rates were both 97.8%, 100%, and 93.8% and 76.9%, …”

Do the authors mean, “The OS rates and DSS rates for T1-3N0 and T4N0 diseases were 97.8%, 100%, and 93.8% and 76.9%, respectively, …”? Please revise this sentence to avoid confusion.

Response:

We apologize that this was unclear. OS was measured from the date of the first dose of radiotherapy or chemotherapy to death due to any cause. The data of patients who were still alive were censored. Disease-specific survival (DSS) is defined as the
time to death as a result of NPC. This event was recorded as death as a result of NPC, or as a result of toxicity from radiotherapy or chemotherapy. Deaths that were unrelated to NPC or treatment were censored.

In this study, only 5.5% patients (6/110) with N0 disease died. Of the six patients who died, four deaths were a result of local recurrence or distant metastasis, two were caused by toxicity from radiotherapy (including radiation-induced temporal lobe injury and nasopharyngeal hemorrhage). So the OS and DSS are the same.

To avoid confusion, we revised this sentence in the revised paper. In T1N0, T2N0, T3N0 and T4N0 disease, the OS rates were 97.8%, 100%, and 93.8% and 76.9%; and the DSS rates were same as the OS rates. (Page 13, Paragraph 4)