Author’s response to reviews

Title: Cell type specificity of female lung cancer associated with sulfur dioxide from air pollutants in Taiwan: an ecological study

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
Manuscript (MS: 1850983597579088) “Cell type specificity of female lung cancer associated with sulfur dioxide from air pollutants in Taiwan: an ecological study”

Dear Dr. John Cherrie,

Thank you very much for your assistance regarding our manuscript. We have carefully addressed yours and the reviewers’ comments/changes, and have incorporated all the suggestions in the revised manuscript. In addition, we have followed the editorial requirements for the journal. If you have any questions regarding the revisions, please contact me. Once again, thank you very much for your assistance.

The answers to the editor's and reviewers’ comments as follow:

**Editorial comments/changes**

**Q1:** With some minor editorial changes the manuscript is suitable for publication.

**A1:** We have made changes based on the editorial suggestion.

Please see line 9-11 and 16-17 of page 1.

line 26 of page 2,

line 40, 47, 51-52, 53 and 55 of page 3,

line 67 of page 4,

line 83, 87-88, 89-90 and 98 of page 5,

line 112 and 115-116 of page 6,

line 147, 150, 154 and 156 of page 7,

line 173 and 178 of page 8,

line 185 of page 9,
line 212-213 and 214 of page 10.

line 238 and 251 of page 11,

and line 260-261 of page 12.

**Additional editorial requirement**

Q1: Please document within your manuscript if the data you have used is openly available. If it is not openly available, please document the name of the ethics committee which approved its use.

A1: We added some statements to interpret this database used by the authors is openly available. Please see lines 76-78 on page 4 and 90-98 on page 5.
**Reviewer’s report**

**For Reviewer: Fintan Hurley**

**Q1:** I suggest a new paragraph for ETS at Line 201. This would imply a conclusion at that point in the paper about active smoking not being an important confounder in this study.

**A1:** Thank you for the reviewer’s suggestion. We edited a new paragraph for ETS and added the following statement to commend the conclusion at that point in the paper about active smoking not being an important confounder in this study. “Therefore, the lower female smoking rates might not be the major contributor for female lung cancer in the present study, there might be another contributor like SO₂ other than smoking to cause female lung cancer in Taiwan.” Please see line 206-209 and 210 of page 9 and 10.

**Q2:** More importantly, I suggest a milder version of the conclusion on ETS. In doing this I admit that I’m not familiar with the papers referred and in particular I don’t know how strong are the negative studies are that are quoted (i.e. is the absence of a relationship because the underlying study was not powerful or is it because ETS really is having no effect). My disposition is to think that ETS is dangerous, whether or not particular studies show it to be so; and from that perspective I would have the conclusions there (Line 220 and onwards) as follows.

**A2:** The conclusion on ETS has been revised to be - “Although ETS may well be a risk factor for lung cancer, there is currently no strong or clear evidence indicating ETS is a risk factor for lung SCC in non-smoking women in Asia. We, therefore, assume that ETS is unlikely to have been an important
confounder in the present study and not controlling for ETS is unlikely to have
had an important effect on our results.” Please see line 229-233 of page 10 and
11.