Title: The disparities in prevalence of neural tube defects and its subtypes at any gestational age in 2006-2008 of China: a study on the hospital-based birth defects surveillance system

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Dr. Norton,

I am sending a manuscript entitled “The disparities in prevalence of neural tube defects and its subtypes at any gestational age in 2006-2008 of China: a study on the hospital-based birth defects surveillance system.” by Xiaohong Li, which we wish to submit for consideration as a Research Article in the *BMC Public Health*.

Neural tube defects (NTDs) is to one of the most serious birth defects. The previous published report indicated that China has one of the highest prevalence of NTDs in the world. However, most of these studies were based on the prevalence of births more than or equal to 28 weeks gestation age, which cannot reflect the real prevalence of NTDs because a large proportion of pregnancies with NTDs can be diagnosed and terminated before 28 gestational weeks. A study is needed to understand the real burden of NTDs and their epidemiological characteristics. The present report describes the prevalence of NTDs at any gestational weeks by removing the impact of prenatal diagnosis and the geographic, residential, and maternal age-specific disparities in prevalence of NTDs at any gestational weeks in China during 2006-2008. We think our research is of interest to your readership because the experience of China in preventing NTDs may benefit other countries, especially developing countries, as well.

The authors guarantee that the manuscript has been submitted solely to the BMC Public Health and that it has not been previously published, either in whole or in part, nor have the findings been posted online.

Our study was approved by the Ethics Committee of West China Second University Hospital of Sichuan University (Ref. no. 20100015). This work was supported and funded by the Ministry of Science and Technology of China (Grant ID : 2006BA 105A01n), Chinese Ministry of Health (Grant ID : QT2003-009 and 05wsb-02) and Program for Changjiang Scholars and Innovative Research Team in University (Grant ID : IRT0935).

We appreciate your consideration of our manuscript, and we look forward to receiving comments from the reviewers.
Yours sincerely

Juan Liang