Author's response to reviews

Title: A blind area of family planning services in China: unintended pregnancy among unmarried graduate students

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Mr Jimmar Dizon,

RE: MS ID. 5117261747003922, entitled “A blind area of family planning services in China: unintended pregnancy among unmarried graduate students”

Thank you for your letter and the referees’ comments for the revision of our manuscript again. Our responses to the reviewers’ re-comments are as follows.

Reviewer 1

Major compulsory:

1. In the “sampling” of study section, the author should explain the number of all unmarried graduate students in these classes recruited, then compute how many student participate in the research. As well, the author should explain how the classes are sampled in detail, for example, the exact proportion of discipline, and whether the proportion is the same or similar in different university and city.

Response: Thanks for your good comments. A multistage, stratified, cluster sampling was used in our survey. All unmarried graduate students in these chosen classes were recruited, which based on ethical guidelines. As a result, 13,544 voluntary participants from 327 classes of 49 universities/colleges of 7 cities were recruited. Relative detail has been showed in the re-revised MS. In present study, our aimed to investigate the potential factors related to unintended pregnancy. We also noticed that exact proportions of discipline, gender, educational level for standardizing the prevalence rate of unintended pregnancy among graduate students of whole china were very important. Thus, your advice was much valuable for our successive research work. Thanks again.

Minor essential revision:

2. the research time should be the same in “background” section and
“method” section.

Response: Thanks for your comments, we have revised these in the re-revised MS.

3. In “Study Setting and Participants”, I could not find the description of participants, thus the title should be “Study Setting”?  
Response: Thanks for your advice, we have revised these in the re-revised MS.

4. I still believe that the denominator should be the students sexually active for the rate of unintended pregnancy and abortion.
Response: Thank you for your advice, we have revealed the prevalence rate of unintended pregnancy and abortion among students active in sex in RESULTS.

To reviewer 2

Q1: P3 Abstract Methods

Here you sampling method was a ‘multistage, stratified, cluster design’, but in P7 sampling session it was a ‘purposive sampling method’. I think the sampling method was decided before the survey, not after writing the paper. The author should provide reasonable and scientific explanation for this.

Response: We are very sorry for this confusion.

As you mentioned, a multistage, stratified, cluster sampling was decided before our survey. And the detail of the sampling was showed as below.

In the first stage of the multistage sampling, considering the study implementation convenience and the representativeness of samples, purposive sampling was recruited to select city from North, West, East, South and Central of China, respectively. In the second stage, stratified random sampling was used to select college/university: (a)
universities/colleges were divided into four layers (comprehensive, science and engineering, literature and history, and medical); (b) two universities/colleges were randomly sampled from each layer (all schools were selected if the number of school of this layer Less than or equal to 2). In the third stage, stratified cluster sampling was used to select class: (a) classes were divided into two layers (doctoral candidate and master candidate); (b) six classes of master candidate were randomly sampled from university/college only have master's degree authorization; six classes of master candidate and two classes of doctoral candidate were randomly sampled from university/college have both master's degree and doctoral’ degree authorization); (c) all unmarried graduate students (the marriage status was recorded in school) in these chosen classes were recruited, which based on ethical guidelines. As a result, 13,544 graduate students from 327 classes were recruited in our study.

We have revised the description for methods of sampling in the re-revised MS.

Q2: P7 sampling
Please clarify how many classes were sampled from each colleges/universities of each chosen city?
Response: Just as mentioned as above question, 6 to 8 classes were sampled from each colleges/universities of each chosen city. We have revised these in the re-revised MS.

Q3: P8 Questionnaire Survey and Data Collection
'The questionnaire …covering 3 topics'. 2nd topic was ‘attitudes towards contraception, pregnancy and abortion’. However, in the data analysis the author only mentioned ‘attitudes towards abortion’.
Response: Thanks for you comments. In present study, we found that “attitude towards abortion” was the critical and essential factor for preventing unintended pregnancy based on exact analysis. Therefore, we just showed the
related data in our MS, even though we also investigated the “attitudes towards contraception and pregnancy” in our 2nd topic in questionnaire survey.

Q4: Table 3

① In table 3 the last variable ‘frequency of use of contraception’, OR for female is <1 but OR for male is >1, please provide sound explanation for this.

Response: Thanks for your comments. Unexpectedly, our current data showed that the variable ‘frequency of use of contraception’, OR for female is <1 but OR for male is >1. We presumed that one of possible factors was: compared with female students, male students had less contraceptive knowledge, less concern on the consequences of unintended pregnancies (in table 3). So, male students had more possible to use a useless contraception or to classify experience unintended pregnancy to contraceptive failure instead of absence of contraception. But our current data still did not show a significantly lower incidence of pregnancy of ‘never use contraception’ (VS ‘always use’, 95%CI: 0.83-3.55; VS ‘often/sometimes use’, 95%CI: 0.96-4.01) among male students and a significant higher incidence of pregnancy of ‘never use contraception’ (VS ‘often/sometimes use’, 95%CI: 0.26-1.53) among female students. Considering the sample size might be not enough large to explain the exact role of contraception use (methods were looked as effective for preventing pregnancy by responders) to prevent unintended pregnancy, so, the exact role of frequency of use of contraception (methods were looked as effective for preventing pregnancy by responders) in unintended pregnancy will be fully addressed in future large sample research work.

② The variable ‘whether knowing the conditions of contraception’ meant ‘students select all correct answers of conditions of contraception but no wrong answers from list’. I still didn’t get what the variable exactly means. The author may need to
provide detail information how they define this variable. For example how was the question asked in the questionnaire? How was the category ‘no’ defined? et al.

Response: Thanks for your comments. In our study, the exact variable is ‘whether knowing the conditions of conception’, but not ‘whether knowing the conditions of contraception’. Thanks.

Q5: P14 1stparagraph
‘From thses, we believe convenient family planning services for graduate students is necessary’. Here, ‘thses’ might be these.
Response: Thank you. We have revised it in the re-revised MS.

P6: P14 last sentence ‘Our data showed both genders that used a condom in the first sex had a significantly lower rate of unintended pregnancy.’ The authors presented the condom use rate in the first sex was 30.4% for females’ partners and 36.9% for males in table 3. But in the same table it only showed female students who used a condom in the first sex had a significantly lower rate (8.4% VS 21.8%) of unintended pregnancy.

Response: Thanks for your comments. Our data showed that 95%CI of OR was not contain 1 in table 3, indicating that the incidence of pregnancy among male who used a condom in the first sex also had a significantly lower rate(p<0.05, 17.6% VS 22.0%).
Q7: P16

‘Based on the multistage, stratified, cluster design, our sample came from...’ But in P7 the sampling session, it was a purposive sampling method.

Response: We are very sorry for this confusion. Just as mentioned in Q1, we have revised these in the re-revised MS.

We greatly appreciate the constructive comments from the two referees. And we look forward to receiving your positive decision.

Sincerely,

Zhou Yuan-zhong