Author's response to reviews

Title: Factors Associated with HIV Infection among Men Who Have Sex with Men in Henan Province, China: A Cross-Sectional Study

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

Many thanks for the positive evaluation and for providing us an opportunity to revise the manuscript “Factors Associated with HIV Infection among Men Who Have Sex with Men in Henan Province, China: A Cross-Sectional Study” (MS: 3080353357334978).

We greatly appreciate your important decision and the reviewers’ comments to the original manuscript. We have finished the revision according to your comments and are now returning the revised version. In this version, we have made detailed revisions according to the suggestions. Our specific responses and the corresponding changes to each of the points are summarized on the following response sheet addressed to the reviewers, and the changes in the revised manuscript have been marked in **YELLOW font**.

We believe that the revision has significantly improved the quality of the manuscript and hope that it will be accepted for publication. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

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Dear editors and reviewers:

We greatly appreciate your careful review, constructive comments and kind corrections to our manuscript (MS: 3080353357334978). We have revised the manuscript according to your comments. The detailed answers to your concerns are below.

Comments from Reviewer #1

No 1. Level of interest: An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

Re: Thank you for your comments. Although some HIV prevention interventions have been conducted in the past years, Zhengzhou city has still entered a critical stage of rapid and widespread increase of HIV/AIDS epidemic among MSM. The percentages of newly reported HIV cases attributable to MSM in Zhengzhou city were less than 10% in 2009, 13.1% in 2010, and 16.0% in 2011. So it is important to identify factors associated with HIV infection among MSM in Zhengzhou city, and make primary strategy to control the HIV spread in MSM population. As most studies, our study suggested that syphilis infection were associated with higher risk of HIV infection, receipt of condoms and consistent condom use during last sex with a male or a female were associated with lower risk of HIV infection. In the study, we also found that for those who were nonlocal resident in Zhengzhou city, the risk of HIV infection was 5.53 times higher which suggested nonlocal resident could be important population for HIV/AIDS epidemic. The intervention strategies that control HIV infection among MSM especially nonlocal resident in Zhengzhou city maybe be meaningful to other cities in the world.

No 2. Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published.

Re: Thank you for your valuable advice. The manuscript was thoroughly edited by a native English speaking professor. We believe that the revision has significantly improved the quality of the manuscript.

Reviewer #2.

Comments from the reviewer:

No 1. The internet is the major source of meeting partners for sex among MSM. No information is solicited regarding use of the internet and it was apparently not used for recruiting.
Re: Thank you for your constructive comments. In this study, we have publicly recruited by internet advertisement 2 weeks prior to the interviewers meeting the respondents at the selected venues. We have added the information.

No2. Please confirm that the questionnaire was self-administered.

Re: Thank you for your valuable advice. We have confirmed in the paragraph.

No3. Where and under what circumstances was the questionnaire administered?

Re: Thank you for your constructive comments. The interviews were administered in a private room in the Zhengzhou Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The information has been added to the methods and is labeled in yellow.

No4. What tests were used to identify HIV antibodies and active syphilis infection?

Re: Thank you for your constructive advice. HIV and syphilis testing were performed on blood samples drawn from the participants. Blood specimens were tested for the HIV antibody by enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) (Beijing Wantai Biologic Medicine Co., China). Reactive ELISA specimens were confirmed by an HIV-1/2 Western Blot immune assay (HIV Blot 2.2 WB; Genelabs Diagnostics, Singapore). Samples testing positive in both tests were considered HIV-positive. Syphilis antibodies were detected by ELISA (Beijing Jinhao Biologic Production Co., China). The information has been added to the methods and is labeled in yellow.

No5. Need additional details of analysis. For example what were the criteria for entry into multivariate analysis?

Re: Thank you for your constructive advice. Descriptive analyses were conducted to describe the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents, sexual behaviors and condom use, HIV/AIDS knowledge and social service utilization, prevalence of HIV and syphilis, and the risk factors for HIV infection. Univariate and multivariable logistic regression analyses were performed to identify factors associated with HIV infection. Variables with a p-value < 0.10 at univariate results were considered eligible for the multivariate analysis. A backward procedure based on the Wald test was used to select significant variables in the multivariate model. The significance level was fixed at $\alpha = 0.05$. We have added the information in the method section.

No6. The authors should separate the associations with HIV infection into those which were associated with higher risk and which were associated with lower risk.

Re: Thank you for your valuable advice. We have revised the part according to your suggestions.
and highlighted the change in yellow.

**No7. Level of interest: An article of limited interest.**

Re: Thank you for your valuable comments. Although some HIV prevention interventions have been conducted in the past years, Zhengzhou city has still entered a critical stage of rapid and widespread increase of HIV/AIDS epidemic among MSM. The percentages of newly reported HIV cases attributable to MSM in Zhengzhou city were less than 10% in 2009, 13.1% in 2010, and 16.0% in 2011. So it is important to identify factors associated with HIV infection among MSM in Zhengzhou city, and make primary strategy to control the HIV spread in MSM population. As most studies, our study suggested that syphilis infection were associated with higher risk of HIV infection, receipt of condoms and consistent condom use during last sex with a male or a female were associated with lower risk of HIV infection. In the study, we also found that for those who were nonlocal resident in Zhengzhou city, the risk of HIV infection was 5.53 times higher which suggested nonlocal resident could be important population for HIV/AIDS epidemic. The intervention strategies that control HIV infection among MSM especially nonlocal residents in Zhengzhou city maybe be meaningful to other cities in the world.

**No8. Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published**

Re: Thank you for your valuable advice. The manuscript also was thoroughly edited by a native English speaking professor. We believe that the revision has significantly improved the quality of the manuscript.

**No9. Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.**

Re: Thank you for your valuable advice.

We thank the reviewers and editors for their comments on the revised manuscript, which were very helpful in our revision process. If there are any further problems or mistakes within the manuscript, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

BO QU