Author's response to reviews

Title: Epidemiological Characteristics of Acute Disseminated Encephalomyelitis in Nanchang China: A Retrospective Study.

Authors:

Chang-hui Xiong (xch964595@126.com)
Yan Yan (yanyan@csu.edu.cn)
Zhen Liao (423558826@qq.com)
Shi-hui Peng (48840052@qq.com)
Hai-rong Wen (1076786031@qq.com)
Yan-xia Zhang (309460191@qq.com)
Shu-hua Chen (dhcdcmgk@126.com)
Jian Li (37796884@qq.com)
Hai-ying Chen (chy@nccdc.org.cn)
Xiao-wu Feng (fxw@nccdc.org.cn)
Hui-qing Yao (690207475@qq.com)
Li Huang (364819691@qq.com)
Li Zhang (769300425@qq.com)

Version: 8 Date: 20 November 2013

Author's response to reviews: see over
Cover letter

Dear Rita Aguirre:

I am very sorry I put you into the troubles again. Thank you very much for your letter and your kindness and the constructive and positive comments. We revised the manuscript again. The amendments are highlighted in red in the revised manuscript. Point by point responses to the reviewers’ comments are listed this following letter. We hope that the revised version of the manuscript is acceptable for publication in our journal.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.
Yours sincerely,

Corresponding author:
Name: Yan Yan
E-mail: yanyan@csu.edu.cn

Editorial comments:

The study of the ecological association between number of vaccines administered and cases of ADEM is rather weak and should be better tested and presented.

Answer:

 Ecological study is a type of descriptive epidemiology research, and it researches the relationship between exposed factors and diseases at population level by describing exposure condition of some factors and the frequency of the disease in the population. Ecological fallacy is the main drawback for such research, and there are other shortcomings. For example it can't distinguish the effects of confounding factors and provide the strong evidences of causal relationship between the exposed factors and the onset of disease.

Because in the study no one of 47 patients was vaccinated within two months before the onset of disease, we explored the relationship between number of vaccines administered and cases of ADEM with ecological study. We collected all number of vaccines administered in Nanchang from 2008 to 2010 to expect to get the probable relation between vaccines and ADEM. It is difficult to get the stronger evidence data of causal relationship. For example, a cohort study on the association between vaccine and ADEM was performed. Just as you have mentioned the result of the study is very weak, so we accepted wholly your comments and inferred a conclusion more prudently in the revised manuscript according to the result of ecological study between number of vaccines administered and cases of ADEM and added some discussion. That is “Because ecological study has some main limitations including ecological fallacy and difficult control of some confounding factors etc. The results of ecological study can not provide strong evidence for an association between exposed factors.
and onset of the disease. Thus, the authors inferred discreetly the following conclusion with the existing research data: there was no evidence of an association between increased number of vaccines administered and number of cases of ADEM in Nanchang, China. It would be satisfactory if a cohort study on the association between vaccine and ADEM was performed.”

The use of some terms need to be revised: for example, "An increase in vaccination dose" should be changed in "An increased number of vaccination"; "More vaccination did not cause more cases of ADEM" in "there was no evidence of an association between increased number of vaccines administered and number of cases of ADEM"; The sentence "The first clinical event is the symptom of infection..." does not make sense and should be rephrased; "a history of precursory infection" is written in a wrong and unusual way, etc.

Answer:

"An increase in vaccination dose" in Abstract and in Discussion has been changed in “An increased number of vaccination...”

"More vaccination did not cause more cases of ADEM" in Abstract, in Discussion and in Conclusion has been changed in "there was no evidence of an association between increased number of vaccines administered and number of cases of ADEM"

"The first clinical event is the symptom of infection..." has been changed in “The infection symptoms appear first...”

"A history of precursory infection" has been adjusted in “history of preceding infection” in Result. Other words “precursory” in manuscript have been changed in “preceding”.
