Author's response to reviews

Title: Sexual behavior and awareness of Chinese university students in transition with implied risk of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV infection: A cross-sectional study

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

Manuscript reference number: 1821612470922010
Title: Sexual behavior and awareness of Chinese university students in transition with implied risk of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV infection: A cross-sectional study

I would like to sincerely thank you and the reviewers for giving us critical advice for improving our manuscript.

We have carefully considered all the valuable comments and have modified the manuscript accordingly.

This covering letter contains a point-by-point list of the changes made, and the revised manuscript is also included for further consideration. We also revised the manuscript according to the points in manuscript formatting checklist provided by BioMed Central website.

Authors of this manuscript would appreciate your consideration of this re-submission.

Thanking you very much, in advance.

Yours sincerely,

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Note: the authors’ explanations are shown under each comment and are marked with a bold circle (● symbol).

Reviewer 1: Nancy Padian

“One general comment is that given the enormous sample size, p-values need to be interpreted very cautiously. At a minimum, the authors should address this and perhaps consider using something like Bonferonni’s test or another method that accounts for potentially misleadingly significant results due to large sample sizes.”

- In order to prevent misleading significant results due to the very large sample size in Table 3, authors have considered only the effect sizes greater than 5% between genders and across the grades and this is now included into the manuscript (page 8).

- Since the Bonferonni’s test is one of the statistical procedures to adjust for multiple testing, we added the phrase “without adjusting for multiple testing because the tests were done for exploratory purposes for the subsequent multivariate analyses” (page 6,7) to show that we are aware of the problem.

“Another general issue is that although the authors point out the importance of the Internet both in the results and the discussion, they do so only in an indirect way. I strongly suggest adding these data to the tables and considering them in the multivariate analyses”.

- As recommended, meeting a girl/boy friend over the internet is added to the table 3; however, as its linear trend between grades did not reach a significant level, it has not been considered in the multivariate analysis.

How consistent has the surveillance system been and could any of the increase in HIV rates be accounted for by better reporting?

- While the increase in the reported cases of HIV could partly reflects expanded surveillance with improved reporting system, it also mirrors escalating HIV epidemic in China as the prevalence of HIV infection has also increased among drug users from 1.95% to 6.48%, and among commercial sex workers from 0.02% to 0.93% between 1996 and 2004. This explanation is also added to the background of the manuscript (page 3).

There is no information as to how the students were recruited. Similarly, how were individuals chosen for the in-depth interviews, focus groups, and piloting of the interviews?

- More information regarding recruitment of the students is now added to the methods of the manuscript (page 5,6).
Reviewer 2: Fred Nuwaha

“Page 6 Give level of statistical significance for Kappa values”.

- As required, level of statistical significance for Kappa values is added to the relevant part in the methods (page 5,6).