Author's response to reviews

Title: Assessing the Disease Burden of Yi Population by Years of Life Lost in Rural China

Authors:

Shang cheng Zhou (zsc_2k@163.com)
Le Cai (caile002@hotmail.com)
Chong hua Wan (wanchh@hotmail.com)
Yi ling Lv (zjc@yymc.edu.cn)
Peng qian Fang (pfang@mails.tjmu.edu.cn)

Version: 2 Date: 5 April 2009

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear reviewer:
we are very grateful to your comments for the manuscript. According with your advice, we amended the relevant part in manuscript. Here below is our description on revision according to the reviewers’ comments.

Replies to Reviewer #1

Reviewer’s report
Title: Assessing the Disease Burden of Yi Population by Years of Life Lost in Rural China
Version: 1 Date: 17 March 2009
Reviewer: siyan zhan
Reviewer’s report:
1. Please provide the detailed population distribution by age and sex.

Response: Yes, these have been added into the revised paper. (Table 1: Distribution of death population by age, sex in Shilin county (2003)). Shilin county is a rural region with a population of 230,548 (116,204 males and 114,344 females) including 77,519 Yi people in 2003.

2. Please discuss the impact of infant and older group over 80y on the YLL.

Response: Yes, these have been added into the revised paper. “61 of the infant population in 0~ group does not matched to larger in YLL of this age group for the infant population losing more life years. On the contrary, the individual in older group over 80y loses less life years. However, older group over 80y is still high in YLL for the large capability. The information above was confirmed that deaths at younger ages may be considered of greater public health concern than deaths at older ages. If intervene steps to bring down the mortality rate of the infant population are performed, the YLL of population will descend sharply.”

We acknowledge the reviewer’s comments and suggestions very much, which are valuable in improving the quality of our manuscript.
Replies to Reviewer #2

Reviewer's report

Title: Assessing the Disease Burden of Yi Population by Years of Life Lost in Rural China

Version: 1 Date: 31 March 2009
Reviewer: Yunfei Lao

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. The purpose of assessing the disease burden of Yi Population is not described clearly. There is no information to show the difference of Yi people and Han people in general context of Shilin (Han people is the major nationality group in Shilin County, even in Yunnan Province and China), and the necessity to analyze the disease burden of Yi people based on the findings of previous observational study or local specific phenomenon on disease occurrence.

Response: In many research articles, to understand the mortality model and expectant lifespan among the residents of main nationalities, indoor investigation was carried out for the people died in a period. For example:


Therefore, we think that there may be some differentials from the disease burden of Different Nationalities between Yi people and Han people. Actually in this article some findings disclose them. The purpose of assessing the disease burden of Yi Population is to find the differentials and provides evidence for gradually enhancing the health level of Yi Population.

2. As there was the study on YLL due to premature death in the year of 2003 in Shilin (see the reference 4 of manuscript), the manuscript should involve the data or results of the previous study into the background part to indicate the linking with it from the methodology or something else.

Response: Yes, these have been added into the revised paper.

3. In terms of the study population, the proportion of Han people in total population and the numbers of deaths of Yi people and Han people in 2003 in Shilin are not showed.
Response: Yes, these have been added into the revised paper (Table 1: Distribution of death population by age, sex in Shilin county (2003)). Shilin county is a rural region with a population of 230,548 (11,6204 males and 114,344 females) including 77,519 Yi people in 2003.

4. In discuss part, there is not analysis on the cause of different disease burden between Han people and Yi people.

Response: Yes, these have been added into the revised paper. “The cause of different disease burden between Han people and Yi people may be such as excessive drinking, hereditary factors, and so on. The phenomenon that ethnic minorities have more frequent reported alcohol intake than Han majority has been demonstrated in other studies”......

Minor Essential Revisions:

1. The background part and introduce part should be combined. The first three sentences and the fifth sentence in the manuscript are the same as in the website --http://www.ynda.yn.gov.cn/ReadNews.asp?NewsID=522, if they are cited from this website, it should be included in the reference. But I donnot think this content and citation relating with Yi langue are necessary to emphasize the special feature of Yi nationality.

Response: The background part and introduce part have been combined. We have added the website references and deleted the sentence about “Yi langue” in our revised manuscript according to the reviewer's suggestions.

2. In the part of “study populations”, I do not think “All individuals residing and dying in 2003” should be included in the analysis as the result that there were deaths of other nationality groups except for Yi and Han in Shilin.

Response: We have revised as “All individuals residing and dying of Han population and Yi population in 2003 were included in the analysis,” according to the reviewer's suggestions.

3. In the part of “Calculation of YLL and mortality rate”, the 2nd sentence “In globe burden of disease studies, YLL incorporates an age-weighting factor so that life…..” is almost repeated in the third paragraph.

Response: We have deleted the repeated sentence in our revised manuscript according to the reviewer's suggestions.

4. The formula of YLL looks very complex, but when K is assigned a value of 0 and the r is assigned 3%, it seems simple, and the simplified formula should be written.
Response: Actually, to calculate YLL, the GBD DALY template was used. Where K is assigned a value of 0 and the r is assigned 3%

5. In the part of “Results”, the resource of “The average life expectancy at birth was 70.8 years (95% CI: 70.0-71.5) in Shinlin county” is not clear.

Response: Combined mortality rate with population distribution (2000 nation census of population), the average life expectancy at birth was 70.8 years (95% CI: 70.0-71.5) in Shinlin county.

6. As the age is continuous variable, in the table 1, the expression of age group should use the low limit and upper limit. The low limit is an exact number, but upper limit is not, such as 0~, 5~, 15~, 30~, 45~, 60~, 70~, 80+

Response: Yes, these have been changed into the revised paper.

7. The table 2 showed that the disease of maternal condition in terms of YLL/1000 population was higher for men than for women both in Yi people and Han people. The author should explore the possible causes.

Response: Yes, these have been added into the revised paper. “This study suggested the disease of maternal condition in terms of YLL/1000 population was higher for men than for women both in Yi people and Han people. The possible causes may be the underreporting deaths of men less than women because the traditional concept is "men are superior to women". Underreporting of deaths has been shown to be more common in infant deaths, especially women.”

Discretionary Revisions:
As the evidence strength of YLL results is related with the death registration system, though the death causes were verified, the author did not mention the baseline assessment of local death registry system, the pitfall may be existing.

Response: Yes, these have been added into the revised paper. “There are a number of limitations to the present study. The strength of this study hinges on the complete vital registration systems, since Shinlin county is surveillance point for vital statistics in China. The problem of underreporting of deaths found in many studies is thus minimized. Underreporting of deaths has been shown to be more common in infant deaths in a previous study, especially in rural regions. Problems identified solely on the basis of mortality data may be underestimated. Such burden will
be the focus of future research. More detailed work could be done to estimate YLL at specific disease level that would take account of differences in mortality outcomes.”

We acknowledge the reviewer’s comments and suggestions very much, which are valuable in improving the quality of our manuscript.

kind regards.
Your sincerely,
Zhou Shangcheng