Author's response to reviews

Title: High Prevalence of Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) Reactivation in Rheumatoid Arthritis Patients Carrying HBV and the Use of Antiviral Prophylaxis: A Real-world Clinical Practice

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Dear Editors:

We would like to submit my original manuscript entitled “High Prevalence of Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) Reactivation in Rheumatoid Arthritis Patients Carrying HBV and the Use of Antiviral Prophylaxis: A Real-world Clinical Practice”, which we wish to be considered for publication as original article in your journal.

Chronic hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection is a global healthcare problem affecting ≥350 million people around the world. HBV reactivation was estimated 50% among patients with hematology-oncology diseases during immunosuppressive therapy and may lead to severe outcomes including hepatitis, acute liver failure, cirrhosis or death. Antiviral prophylaxis is recommended by international associations for the study of liver disease based on clinical evidence mainly derived from cancer chemotherapy in the hematology-oncology field. However, there’re great differences of host immune status, the types and intensity of immunosuppressant between rheumatoid arthritis (RA) patients and hematology-oncology patients. In real-world clinical practice, some patients could not continue antiviral therapy due to high economic burden, poor patient compliance and efficacy/safety of antiviral drugs.

This study provided follow-up records of 36 RA patients carrying HBV ranging 12~70 months in real-world clinical practice and the prevalence of DMARD-induced HBV reactivation was established as high as 36% and the prevalence of HBV hepatitis following reactivation was 17%. Our study first highlighted poor patient acceptance and discontinuation of antiviral prophylaxis for Chinese RA patients carrying HBV. Using survival curve and multivariate regression analysis, our results demonstrated two innovative risk factors of DMARD-induced HBV reactivation for RA patients carrying HBV, there are, discontinuation of antiviral prophylaxis and past history of hepatitis. Thus, this article would be interesting to the readers of BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders.

Statements made by all the authors are as follows:

(1) The article has not been published and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere;
(2) There is no prior publication or the submission elsewhere of any part of the work;
(3) There are no financial or other relationships that could lead to a conflict of interest;
(4) The manuscript has been read and approved by all of the authors;
(5) The contribution of each author is as follows:

Ying-Qian MO and An-Qi LIANG contributed equally to this work, including conceiving and designing the study, advising on the search, reading and analyzing documents, and drafting the paper. Corresponding author Lie DAI also contributed to conceiving and designing the study, advising on the search, reading and analyzing documents, and editing the paper. Jian-Da Ma, Le-Feng Chen, Dong-Hui Zheng conducted the document search, read and analysed the documents. H. Ralph Schumacher advised on the search and edited the paper. All seven authors take responsibility for the content of the paper.

We hope that the manuscript meets the high standards of your journal. We are looking forward to receiving a favorable response from you regarding the acceptance of our Manuscript. Thank you and best regards.

Sincerely yours,
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