Author's response to reviews

Title: Health-Related Quality of Life and Influencing Factors among Rural Left-Behind Wives in Liuyang, China

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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Dear Dr. Simone Vigod and Ms April Rada,

Thanks for your work on our manuscript entitled “Health-Related Quality of Life and Influencing Factors among Rural Left-Behind Wives in Liuyang, China” (MS:7030712841135311). We would also like to thank the two reviewers for their helpful comments. We have responded to the reviewers’ comments point by point as well as revised the manuscript. The changes we have made to the manuscript are highlighted with yellow marker in the revised manuscript.

**Response to Reviewer 1#: Boliang Guo**

I had read the manuscript titled ‘Health-Related Quality of Life and Influencing Factors among Rural Left-Behind Wives in Liuyang, China’ and feeling the study merit to considered for publishing purpose. Here is my comments/suggestion about this study, arranged in your suggested order/style.

I would suggest this manuscript should be accepted for publishing if the author could address some issues which should be regarded as minor essential revision.

I would say the study has lots of outstanding merits and huge interest in its field, given that the left-behind women is a specific group but with enormous number across the whole China due to recent 30 years industrialization. The well being of this special group is critical to a healthy society and the findings to help them living better can be generalized to and referred by other developing areas such as middle American, south-east and south Asian, some African countries, and east European countries due to recent large scale migration to west European. Even for developed country like UK, there are still some left-behind women due to her partner/husband works in other city where the daily commute is no practical. For this reason I would say the topic has great implication for a healthy model society!!

*Re: Thanks for your positive comments and valuable advices.*
I would say the current version manuscript needs some language corrections before being published, I would suggest the author ask some native English speaker helping to polish their English.

Re: Thanks for your advices. A native English speaker had revised the manuscript carefully to improve the languages of this manuscript.

I do not think the manuscript need to be seen by a senior statistician any more as the team showed strong stats knowledge already and results presenting fit the study purpose very well!! The sampling process is correct and the huge size sample is representative so that the results are rigor and robust with merits of great external validity. The Data analysis is generally correct. However, there are still some points which the author could consider as suggestion to improve in their future ready-to-publish version manuscript.

a) In addition to the current main analysis, please also briefly present the exploratory analysis result such as normality check for continuous variables. How to deal with skewed variables if there were any?

Re: Normality assumptions were satisfied for continuous variables in this study. We have added this sentence “Normality assumptions were satisfied for continuous variables in this study” in the revised manuscript to indicate that the distributions of the continuous variables were normal.

b) Numbering table in consecutive number as there are two table 2 at the moment. Specify whether sd or se used in table 1 and table 2s. I would also suggest to leave out the t value and Chi-sqr value columns presented in these tables for concise purpose, but my suggestion will surely be subject to the journal requirement on table presenting style!

Re: Thanks for your carefulness. We numbered the four tables in consecutive number, the second Table 2 in the original manuscript was actually Table 3, and we
corrected it in the revised manuscript.

We added the note “$\bar{x} \pm SD$” in Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3 to specify that sds were used in Tables. Also, in the Data analysis of the revised manuscript, we added a sentence “Categorical variables were expressed as frequency and percent distribution, while continuous variables were presented as means ± standard deviation” to specify sd used in this study.

According to your advice, we read the journal style requirements carefully, and leaved out the t value and Chi-sqr value columns presented in these tables for concise purpose.

c) Ideally table 4 should be presented in ‘beta(95% CI), P=’ or ‘beta(se), P=’ format. I prefer exact p to * expressing significance level as exact p value could be useful for future meta analysis study and the suggestion is well documented and endorsed by many medical journals!!

Re: Thanks for your good suggestion. According to your advice, we revised the Table 4 to present it in specific format and leaved out some unnecessary data, as you will see in the revised manuscript.

d) Including the interaction term of left-behind status with each other covariate, as the coefficient of each interaction term is the difference of interests covariates between normal and left-behind women.

Re: Thanks for your advice. The interactions between left-behind status and each other covariate would be helpful to clarify the different effects of other covariate on left-behind wives and non-left-behind wives. However, we have compared the differences of other covariate between the two groups, and the regression in this study was to predict these factors that influence the quality of life of rural left-behind wives, therefore, left-behind status and other covariates entered the regression while interaction were not included.
Please justify criteria of dichotomizing women’s PCS score.

Re: Thanks for your carefulness. A new and more appropriate reference replaced the old reference.

Reference: Sprenkle MD, Niewoehner DE, Nelson DB: The Veterans Short Form 36 Questionnaire Is Predictive of Mortality and Health-Care Utilization in a Population of Veterans With a Self-Reported Diagnosis of Asthma or COPD. *CHEST* 2004, 126:81–89.
Response to Reviewer 2#: Simone Vigod

Introduction is clear, concise and well-structured. Sampling methods were appropriate, with an excellent (almost unbelievable) response rate. Results were straightforward as were the implications of findings and the contextualization within existing literature. Limitations were appropriately addressed.

Re: Thanks for your positive comments.

Major compulsory revisions:

1. I’m not sure that I understand why the SF-36 outcome was dichotomized in this way. Has this method been used in other studies? It was referenced, but should be explained more fully.

Re: Thanks. In a previous study, researchers divided their sample into quartiles of PCS and MCS for their purposes of analysis (Sprenkle et al., 2004), therefore, in this study, we divided our sample into two group according to physical and mental health composite scores of the SF-36 (scores ≥ 25% vs. else), which is also acceptable in the view of statistics. The new reference replaced the old one in the revised manuscript.


2. The logistic regression appears to have been done appropriately, although the exact method for determining the final model should be explained (i.e. how was the model building done? How was the final model chosen?).

Re: Thanks for your suggestion. We added several sentences in the Data analysis to make it clear for readers, for example, “which served as dependent variable, respectively.” and “In addition, the number of children and CES-D, SCSQ, PSSS, and PSS scores served as independent variables and were analyzed
for each factor’s influence on the physical and mental health composite scores.”

Minor essential revisions:

Abstract:

1. Second sentence does not make sense.

   Re: Thanks. We have revised it into “Left-behind wives might have more psychological stress and lower life quality.”

Thank you again for your attention and consideration.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

Shuqiao Yao, M.D. & Ph.D.

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