Author's response to reviews

Title: Clinical Research Evidence of Cupping Therapy in China: A Systematic Literature Review

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

Thank you very much for further reviewing our manuscript, we did some revisions as marked in the text. Based on the author query for our manuscript, we made the modifications. Below are the detailed responses to all the points.

Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Best regards,

Huijuan Cao and author team

1. Responses to the Author Query

Reviewer 1 (Karen Sherman):

Reviewer's report:
All of my concerns have been addressed satisfactorily.

Reviewer 2 (Rainer Stange)

AU1: Page 6 randomized clinical trials (RCTs). Usually, RCT is an acronym for randomized controlled trial. I think none of the reviewers asked for a change?

Reply: We revised it.

AU2: I asked to explain Bi syndrome shortly. If you are not at the word limit in your final version, I would like to see a more lengthy definition. Same still applies to description of deficiency. I think it is the wish of authors as well as the journal that also readers unfamiliar with TCM have a benefit from reading.

Reply: We added the explanation in the text.

AU3: Page 10 I read it like this:Twelve out of the top 20 conditions in this review, 12 of them were pain related conditions, including pain, this is almost pleonastic, so maybe it should read … 12 of them were pain related, including…
Reply: We revised it.

AU4: Page 12 no trial of 73 RCTs none of the 73 RCT …

Reply: We revised it.


Reply: We revised it.

AU6: quantitative synthesis not synthesis. Quantitative analysis or explicitly estimation of effect sizes..

Reply: We revised it.

AU7: Page 14 No included studies mentioned the serious adverse effects with related to cupping therapy in the study reports. This is a new sentence. You should re-phrase it. I am pretty sure you mean it like that: Serious adverse effects were not reported in any of the trial publications.

Reply: We revised it.

AU8: Discussion instead of plural

Reply: We revised it.

AU9: Page 14 The major problems in the methods…I would say you describe weaknesses or flaws of the trials thereafter, also I would prefer ‘methodology’ instead of methods, as it is the more superior term to also give a view on application of an established ‘method’ like an RCT

Reply: Sorry, we did not find the sentence you mentioned in this page.

AU10: Page 16 this is apparently a new formulation:…the therapeutic effect of TCM therapies for fibromyalgia. Based on a meta-analysis of two trials in this review. Please make it clear: is the whole meta-analysis made out of 2 trials? Then it would be unusual to call it a meta-analysis, hardly a review. Or do you mean something like: ‘sub-analysis of 2 out of the …trials of this meta-analysis. In any way, meta-analysis and review are used in a confusing way.

Reply: It was a sub-analysis, and we revised it in the text.
AU11: Page 18 And recently we searched PubMed again, finding two more newly-published-RCTs conducted outside China, which is very encouraging. But you should make it clear, whether the time limit of your systematic retrieval is December 2008 or October 2010. If you stick to 2008, which would make sense me, you should just mention further activities, which is legitimate when you discuss results of your research, maybe: ‘Meanwhile, two further RCT with cupping originating outside China (or explicitly from Iran and Germany) have been published, demonstrating increasing interest in this field…. or similarly.

Reply: We revised it.

AU12: This is merely a diagnostic study on the same study population you quoted as [88] originally ‘Brachialgia…’. So if you want to talk about therapy, the publication originally used as [88] is more important, if you want to also point to research into the correlation between dysfunction of an organ and representation of this as change of state of subcutaneous soft tissue, this further publication may be mentioned in addition.

Reply: Thank you, we used the previous one.