Author's response to reviews

Title: Chinese herbal medicine Guizhi Fuling Formula for treatment of uterine fibroids: a systematic review of randomised clinical trials

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Version: 7
Date: 16 December 2013

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

Thank you very much for your constructive comments for our manuscript entitled “Chinese herbal medicine Guizhi Fuling Formula for treatment of uterine fibroids: a systematic review of randomised clinical trials” (ID: 1103050009107742). We have revised our manuscript accordingly. We tracked all changes and the changes highlighted in yellow were revised according to your comments. Our responses to the comments, in a point by point format, are as follows:

Following all responses to Editor:

1. In the methods, detailed description on planned subgroup analyses should be added.
   
   Response: We have added the detailed description of planned subgroup analysis in the methods section accordingly. (See P8, 1st paragraph, under Method)

2. There are a lot of typos and grammatical errors throughout the manuscript. For example,

   [Abstract]

   1. A total of 38 RCTs were identified with involved 3816 participants.
   -× A total of 38 RCTs involving 3816 participants were identified.

   2. Guizhi Fuling Formula was significant improvement in dysmenorrhea either used alone (RR 2.27, 95%CI 1.04 to 4.97) or in combination with mifepristone (RR 2.35, 95%CI 1.15 to 4.82).

   -× Guizhi Fuling Formula significantly improved symptoms of dysmenorrhea either when it was used alone (RR 2.27, 95%CI 1.04 to 4.97) or in combination with mifepristone (RR 2.35, 95%CI 1.15 to 4.82).

   Response: We have revised them accordingly, and we invited Nissi Wang from USA for professional editing. (See P2, “Abstract: Result” section)

3. A FULL English language editing is required before submitting revised manuscript.

   Response: We invited the American Medical English Editor Nissi Wang to do language
Following all responses to Reviewer Dr. Ernest Ng:

1. In ‘Introduction’ section:
   Page 3 Line 6: ‘menstrual’, not ‘menstruation’
   Page 3 Line 16: ‘significantly are not compatible with reproduction’ should be ‘may affect fertility’
   Page 3 Line 20: ‘by a famous” should be ‘by a famous’

   **Response:** We have revised them accordingly. (See P3 2nd and 3rd paragraph)

2. In ‘Results’ section:
   Page 6 Para 3: the number of recruited studies should be stated in text.

   **Response:** We have added “ and we included 38 trials at last.” (See P8 2nd paragraph)

   Page 7 Para 3: Only 50% of studies reported the method of measuring the volume of uterine fibroids. As the primary outcome parameter is volume of the fibroids, it is impossible to assess the quality of papers without this information. The authors should be contacted for details. If no further details can be obtained, these studies should be deleted from the analysis.

   **Response:** We have revised accordingly. The outcome of fibroid volume was all measured by ultrasonography. 34 trials reported the primary outcome of fibroid volume, of which 19 trials reported different parameters to represent the volume of uterine fibroids. Among the 19 trials, 12 trials reported average volume of maximum fibroids, two trials reported total volume of multiple fibroids, and three trials reported average volume of multiple fibroids, two trials reported average diameter of fibroids. 15 trials did not clarify parameters representing fibroid volume. We attempted to contact the authors of the 15 trials and only the authors of two trials provided detailed information. So at last, 21 trials reported different parameters representing the volume of uterine fibroids. Volume of fibroids of the remaining 13 trials without clarified parameters was narratively synthesized. (See P9, 2nd and 3rd paragraph)

   Page 9 Para 2: Twenty eight trials are in this comparison, and they applied different methods to
measure the volume of uterine fibroids. The methods to measure the volume of uterine fibroids should be clarified and stated in the text clearly. Or the authors wanted to state different ways to represent the volume of uterine fibroids such as the total volume, the maximal volume etc.

**Response:** Yes, we wanted to state different parameters to represent the volume of uterine fibroids such as average volume of maximum fibroids, total volume of multiple fibroids, and average volume of multiple fibroids. We have revised accordingly. (See P8, 1st paragraph; P9, 3rd paragraph; P10, 2nd paragraph; P11, 3rd and 6th paragraph; P26, Table 1)

3. In ‘Discussion’ section:

Page 12 Line 1: replace ‘manifested’ with ‘showed’

**Response:** We have revised accordingly. (See P15, 1st paragraph)

Following all responses to Reviewer Dr. Myeong Soo Lee:

1. Please add the search strategy for at least one DB.

   **Response:** we have added specific search terms of PubMed. (See P5, 2nd-6th paragraph)

2. Please subdivide the inclusion/exclusion criteria according to PICOS.

   **Response:** we have subdivided the inclusion/exclusion criteria according to PICOS as the style of Cochrane review. (See P5-7, ‘Inclusion/exclusion criteria’ section)

3. Please add the ROB table as supplement.

   **Response:** we have added the table of Risk of bias of included studies as ‘Additional file 5’.

We appreciate for Editors/Reviewers’ work earnestly again. We are looking forward to your further response.

Yours sincerely,

Jianping Liu on behalf of all authors