Author's response to reviews

Title: How risky is caring for emergency patients at risk of malpractice litigation: a population based epidemiological study of Taiwan's experiences

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Dear Editor and Reviewers:

Thank you for your prompt responses and kind assistance. We have revised the article once again according to your suggestions. The point to point responses are as follows.

1. We feel the same need to get more updated. However, one of the disadvantages of secondary data analyses is that certain time lag does exist due to the availability of datasets. We have added the following language in the last paragraph (p.16) as a limitation of our research: “Due to the limitation of data availability, this study only analyzed the NHI reimbursement claim data up to 2002 and the district court decision database up to 2006. Therefore, further studies based on longer and more updated observations are warranted to validate this study’s findings.”

2. The reviewer is correct that our findings do not provide causal evidences leading to the conclusion of defensive medicine. Our findings only indicate misdiagnosis remains the major complaint of plaintiffs in subsequent litigations. So we pointed out that it is only possible that emergency physicians may order more tests and exams as assurance measures in facing ER patients. We have deleted the last sentence in the conclusions and modified languages in the discussion (2nd paragraph of p.13) to avoid the causal implication between our findings and defensive medicine.

3. The release of the NHI reimbursement claim dataset to be used in this study was approved by the National Health Research Institute, Taiwan. This sentence has been added in the end of the first paragraph of p.8.

4. The competing interests and authors’ contributions sections have been added as instructed.

Sincerely,

Che-Ming Yang