Author's response to reviews

Title: Child neglect in one-child family from Suzhou City of Mainland China

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

Many thanks for the comments provided by three reviewers. According to their suggestions, we have revised them point by point. Additionally, we have invited a native to have the language editing.

Comment 1

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. The study still needs stronger theoretical justification in the introduction. You mention that Zhang et al reported a difference between one-child and multiple-child families, but you don’t say what the direction was. Were one-child families characterized by lower neglect in this study? More detail about your expectations is required. For example, why did you choose to focus on one-child families and what did you expect to find with respect to the rates of neglect and predictors of neglect in these families? Would you expect the correlates of neglect found in other studies to be similar in this sample, or are there unique factors associated with neglect in one-child families? The introduction still needs to be fleshed out more.

RESPONSE: Many thanks for the review’s suggestion. We have revised the introduction according to his comments. We have also added the direction of the difference of neglectful level between one-child and multiple-child families and the details of our expectation in this study(see the last paragraph of the section of introduction).

2. Sill more information is needed to interpret the cut-off scores for neglect subtypes. I see that the cut-points were based on national norms, but that doesn’t tell me how those cut-points were determined. Were they the sample means from the Pan study? One standard deviation above the mean? Were the cutoff scores validated in Pan’s study (e.g., did neglectful parents have children with worse outcomes?). Because the Pan article is in Chinese, you will need to more thoroughly explain how these cutoff scores were derived for an English audience so that readers can interpret the rates of neglect in this sample.

RESPONSE: Thanks for these suggestions. We have interpreted how the cut-points of neglect subtype of SCNUC were determined and explained in more detail the validity of
the results determined by the cutoffs (see the second paragraph of the section of methods).

Minor Essential Revisions:

1. The language/grammar could still use attention. There are still issues with missing or extra articles and subject-verb agreement.
   
   RESPONSE: Thanks for this comment. We have invited a native to have a language editing. The missing or extra articles and subject-verb disagreement were revised according to the comments.

2. The first paragraph of the results mentions medical neglect. It appears that medical neglect is no longer being included in this manuscript, so please remove it. Please also check the means and standard deviations in this paragraph and fix the formatting (i.e., SD = ###, range = ## to ##).
   
   RESPONSE: Thanks for finding these errors. We have deleted the concerning results of the medical neglect in first paragraph of results. We also revised the formatting of the means and standard deviations in this paragraph.

3. It is unclear to me why school, child age, and gender and the only characteristics included in Table 2. I would drop Table 2, but if you decided to keep it, the Table should include all characteristics and discuss them in more depth. Also, drop medical neglect from Table 2.
   
   RESPONSE: We have dropped the Table 2 according to this suggestion.

Discretionary Revisions:

1. I would like to see post-hoc tests for the significant ANOVAS in Table 1.
   
   Without them it’s hard to tell which means are different.
   
   RESPONSE: We have added the post-hoc tests to clarify the difference of the means.

Comment 2

There are some recurring problems with plurals through the MS (e.g. one child “family” instead of one child “families” and other phrases, but none of this
grammatical imperfection clouds the meaning of the data or their interpretation.

RESPONSE: Thanks for the comments. We have revised these grammatical errors according to the reviewer’s suggestion.

Comment 3

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
No – Although the manuscript starts with a clear definition of neglect it does not build on earlier Chinese research? Several Chinese studies are now mentioned in the introduction without the author is addressing how they are building on this knowledge. It would be useful to have some discussion regarding the cultural appropriateness of the SCNUC and other potential strengths and limitations. In addition, some researchers have reported on neglect correlates (14-18) – what did they find? Similarly one-child and multiple-child families differ in their neglect exposure (18) – how? Usually the introduction includes an explanation what we know about a topic, what’s left to discover and what the present research will add.

RESPONSE: Many thanks for the reviewer’s suggestions. We have added some discussion concerning about the cultural appropriateness of the SCNUC and its potential limitation and the major finding of the neglect correlates in China (see paragraph 3 of the section of introduction). We have also added the results of the difference of neglect levels between one-child and multiple-child families and the details of our expectation of this study(what the present research will add according to the discovering of the previous studies)(see paragraph 4 and 5 of the section of introduction).

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
- Yes in general and the analysis has improved from the last iteration. However, the attachment that was mentioned in previous version of the manuscript and in this version was not available to me. More importantly there is no mention on how data linkage was conducted.

3. Are the data sound?
- The presentation of the data has improved.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting the data? -Yes. However, was their any co-occurrence of the various types of neglect?
RESPONSE: Thanks for this comment. We have added the co-occurrence of neglect subtypes after reporting the prevalence of any neglect (see paragraph 1 in the section of results)

5. Are the discussion and conclusion well balanced and adequately supported?
- No as pointed out in my previous review Furthermore, it would be useful if the comparisons were addressed more succinctly. It would be helpful to start with the comparison of overall prevalence estimates, than the sub types and finally discuss the correlates in the context of existing comparable literature.
RESPONSE: Thanks for these suggestions. Because it is difficult to have a cross-nation comparisons, we just compared the ordering of prevalence of neglect subtypes and address it more succinctly. Moreover, according to the reviewer’s suggestion, the prevalence of any neglect (overall neglect) was also reported in this study. In the paragraph 2 of the section of discussion, we started with the comparison of any neglect and then neglect subtypes.

6. Are the limitations of the work clearly stated?
- I am pleased that the authors added text regarding my previous comment on social desirability responses. Thanks!

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
- No, see comments for the introduction.
RESPONSE: We added our acknowledgement for all other researchers such as Zhang and Duan who had studied on child neglect in Chinese and whose reports have been compared in our studies.

8. Does the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
- Yes
9. Is the writing acceptable?
- No. The Manuscript requires language editing before publication. In addition, to grammatical errors the authors need to read the manuscript carefully. For instance, in the introduction, the risk correlates of neglect are missing direction, maternal age is not a risk correlate – young age should be specified. The same issue needs to be addressed for maternal education etc.

RESPONSE: Many thanks for the pointing out these errors. The language editing has been conducted by an English language native. We have also added the direction of the correlates of neglect in the section of abstract and introduction.