Author's response to reviews

Title: Role of Verbal Autopsy in determining high occurrence of cancer along Huai River Basin, in China

Authors:

Xia Wan Dr. (wanxia.china@gmail.com)
Maigeng Zhou Dr. (maigengzhou@126.com)
Zhuang Tao Dr. (chijingba@vip.sina.com)
Gonghuan Yang Prof. (yangghuan@vip.sina.com)

Version: 3 Date: 17 May 2011

Author's response to reviews: see over
May 16, 2011

Dear Editor,

We are submitting a revision of manuscript entitled “Applying Verbal Autopsy to Infer Cause of Death in H River Basin, China” for special thematic series on verbal autopsy in “Population Health Metrics”. Based on the two reviewers’ comments, we revised it point-by-point. The main changes are showing as below:

Firstly, we changed the title to “Role of Verbal Autopsy in determining high occurrence of cancer along Huai River Basin, in China”.

Secondly, we clarify the aim of this paper. We focus on role of verbal autopsy in determining high occurrence of cancer along Huai river basin. So we changed the background part, including the following points: 1) along Huai river, there is no vital registration system on COD since 1975; 2) In order to determine high occurrence of cancer in those areas, we should do a retrospective survey on death causes; 3) As the retrospective survey has many limitations, we should use a validated verbal autopsy (VA) to assist to COD diagnosis.

In this paper, we just used the validated VA to determine whether high occurrence of cancer really exists along the Huai river basin. The results just prepared for the further research on relationship between water pollution and “cancer village”. So as a sample data, we just selected from S County and Y District, not including X County. If the differentials in cancer mortality and morbidity rates found between control and study areas, it would be need another further research, which goes beyond of this paper’s research.

Also in order to clarify some points of this paper, we had change methodology and result parts, including the inclusion criteria of study and control area, the comparison of two areas by economic index and age distribution. We changed or added some tables and figures, for example, the figure of cause-specific mortality fractions for major causes of death.

About the written English, we changed “prevalence survey” to “morbidity survey”, and other words.

With thanks for your consideration,
Xia Wan, PH.D
Institute of Basic Medical Sciences of Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences and School of Basic Medicine of Peking Union Medical College, Beijing, China
Wanxia.china@gmail.com

Maigeng Zhou, PH.D
Deputy Director of public health surveillance and information service Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Beijing, China
maigengzhou@126.com

zhuang Tao, PH.D
Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Beijing, China
chijingba@vip.sina.com

Prof. Yang Gonghuan MD MPH
Deputy Director General of China CDC
Institute of Basic Medical Sciences of Chinese Academy of Medical Yangghuan@vip.sina.com