Author's response to reviews

Title: FREQUENCY PATTERNS OF CORE CONSTIPATION SYMPTOMS AMONG THE ASIAN ADULTS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Version: 1 Date: 21 Jun 2017

Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor and reviewers.

Thank you for the response. We have revised the manuscript and made the necessary corrections according to the reviewers’ comment. The comments and amendments were stated as below.

Reviewer 1: Massimo Bellini

1) should also describe the same issues in western population (producing tables comparing the possible geographical differences, if any), and discussing them more in depth. They use only few lines of their paper to describe the “core” symptoms in Western countries.

Indeed, in my opinion, this in depth comparison could be the real "news"

- We acknowledge the importance to compare the two populations (Asia and West). Several recent studies from the West were included using similar eligibility criteria to represent the issue in the Western population and the results presented in Table 5 and 6, Page 26-27.

- We provide a revised discussion section to include more comparison between the Asian and the western data based on these tables. (Discussion section, line 191-194, 199-200, page 8; Line 209-210, page 9)

- These papers have been included where relevant in addition to other papers and presented in the form of table. Papers that did not meet eligibility criteria of the study were used to support the result. (Table 5 and 6, Page 26-27; Discussion section, page 8-11)

3) In the discussion the authors should report more in depth how lifestyle and cultural and dietary behaviors are able to affect the perception of symptoms, is there a different symptom perception between male and females.

- Some discussion on the lifestyle and cultural issue were included in the original manuscript. In order to report this issue more in depth, we have revised the paragraph.

- The point (difference between male and female) was included in the original manuscript. In this version, this point was reported more in depth. (Discussion section, line 209-234, page 9&10)

4) Line 59: “too large this range, see Lacy BE Rome IV Criteria”

- The prevalence of constipation reported here is within the range of the world-wide prevalence of IBS, which is 11.2% (95% confidence interval: 9.8%-12.8%) (Lacy et al 2016) and therefore we intend to keep this data to make a point that constipation is less prevalent in Asia.

   (Background section, line 59-62, page 3).

5) Line 61: the meaning of this phrase is quite obscure: the authors should make it clearer.

- This phrase has been explained based on patient-centric culture principle of Weiss and Tyink (2009). (Background section, line 64-66, page 3).

6) Line 65: "The scopes of perception may include views...": absolutely not clear

- The sentence has been improved (Background section, line 69-70, page 3).

7) Line 66: It isn’t a problem of controlling symptoms (probably that it's true for fecal incontinence) the problem is that symptoms deeply affect everyday's life

- The sentence has been improved (Background section, line 71, page 3).

8) Line 68: The authors should explain better this issue.

- Explanation has been provided
9) Line 69: What are assistive measures?
- The sentence has been revised
(Background section, line 75, page 3).

10) Line 70: probably the use of laxatives is an indirect sign of the presence of constipation
- This point has been included
(Background section, line 76, page 3).

11) Line 72: Rome Criteria are a consensus based on Delphi method and not an example of “self-reported measures”
- This has been removed from the sentence (Background section, page 4).

12) Line 75: the meaning of this phrase is quite obscure
- This has been removed
(Background section, page 4).

13) Line 103: Delete the sentence
- The sentence has been deleted
(Methods section, page 5)

14) Line 111: the authors should better explain the issue
- The issue was explained
(Methods section, line 115-117, page 5)

15) English could be improved
- We did corrections as per suggestion. The manuscript was submitted to the English language editing service for further improvement.

Reviewer 2: Giuseppe Chiarioni

a) comparison with epidemiology studies not related to the Rome criteria.

- It is not our intention in the current paper to review studies outside of Rome but having review literatures based on the Rome criteria allow a more homogenous results and discussion

b) Authors' suggestions about efficacy of the Rome Criteria to diagnose FC and IBS in Asian Populations according to the reported data.

- The point has been included in discussion (Discussion section, line 247-267, page 10-11)

Thank you