Author’s response to reviews

Title: Sustained serological and complete responses in HBeAg-Positive Patients treated with Peginterferon alfa-2b: a 6-Year Long-Term Follow-Up of a Multicenter, Randomized, Controlled Trial in China

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Technical Comments:

1. Manuscript Headings

In order to be in line with journal requirements please change your “Introduction” heading to instead read “Background”.

Please add a “Conclusions” section after the “Discussion” section. This should state clearly the main conclusions of the research article and give a clear explanation of their importance and relevance.

Response: We have replaced the heading “introduction” with “background”. In addition, we added the conclusions section after discussion section in the revised manuscript.
2. Ethical Approval

In the “Ethics approval and consent to participate” section of the Declarations please include the full name of the ethics committee (and the institute to which it belongs to) that approved the study and the committee’s reference number if appropriate.

If you did not need formal ethics approval please confirm that this complies with national guidelines and provide a reference which supports this. Alternatively, supply a statement that says that a local ethics committee ruled that no formal ethics approval was required in this particular case.

Response: We apologized the missing information. We have included the full name of the ethics committee and the approved number in the material and methods section of revised manuscript.

3. Authors Contributions

Please represent authors' names using their initials, not their full name, in the Authors’ Contributions section of your Declarations. If there are any duplicated initials, please differentiate them to make it clear that the initials refer to separate authors.

Please include a statement in the Authors' contributions section to the effect that all authors have read and approved the manuscript, and ensure that this is the case.

Response: Thanks for the comments. We have removed the full name in the authors’ contributions section. In addition, we have added this description to the end of authors' contributions section in the revised manuscript.
5. Clean Manuscript

Please upload your manuscript as a single, final, clean version that does not contain any tracked changes, comments, highlights, strikethroughs or text in different colours. All relevant tables/figures/additional files should also be clean versions. Figures (and additional files) should remain uploaded as separate files. Please also ensure that all figures, tables, and supplementary/additional files are cited in the text.

Response: Thanks for the comments. We have removed all tracked changes, comments, highlights, strikethroughs or colors in the revised manuscript and uploaded as a single, final and clean file.

Editor Comments:

The authors have sufficiently addressed the comments.

Two more final edits should be incorporated.

- Abstract: The paragraph on HBeAg seroconversion post treatment (i.e. between EOS and LTFU) reads confusing. I would suggest: “a considerable number of patients achieved sustained SR (18.2-29.9%) and sustained CR (14.8-18.3%) after EOS despite no further NA treatment.”

- Table 4: delete LTFU section, this does not provide any information. The effect of antivirals on LTFU responses has been discussed within the manuscript text.

Response: We deeply appreciated the editor on this part of work. We have edited the confusing sentence of the abstract and delete LTFU section of the Table 4.