Author’s response to reviews

Title: Association between social capital and health-related quality of life among left behind and not left behind older people in rural China

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Dear editor,

We have revised the manuscript following your comments. The following are the questions and answers:

1. Please include a solid base for your definition of social capital.

We have revised the part “theoretical frameworks of the social capital concept”. In our study, we follow the “structural/ cognitive” distinction, which has gained currency in the literature. We also use this framework to choose the indicators of social capital. Some commonly used indicators are taken as proxy measures, such as social participation, trust and reciprocity and social networks.

2. Please check the validity of the 14-item index.

We have checked the validity of the indicators. Based on the factor analysis, fourteen social capital related questions were classified into different dimensions with varimax rotation and an eigenvalue greater than 1. The KMO was 0.724 and the p value of Bartlett’s test was less than 0.001. The procedure yielded four dimensions and explained 67.3% of the total variance. The eigenvalue for four dimensions was 3.488, 2.856, 1.828 and 1.254 respectively and the four dimensions accounted for 21.3%, 17.7%, 16.9% and 11.4% of the total variance respectively. The reliabilities of the four identified constructs, presented as Cronbach’s alpha, were α=0.871 for social participation, α=0.717 for neighborhood relationship and support, α=0.398 for trust and reciprocity and α=0.711 for personal network. In general, the reliability and validity of the factor analysis were relatively good.

3. Please justify the contrast between left-behind and otherwise.
In the part of results, we contrasted the difference of social capital and HRQoL between being left behind and not being left behind. We also discussed the difference between being left behind or not in the part of discussion.