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 really appreciate your comments and we have revised the manuscript under your comments.

We used structural/cognitive frame to measure social capital, we added that “Since the publication of previous theories, most researchers have distinguished structural and cognitive dimensions of social capital. The former subsumes attitudinal manifestations, such as values, norms, beliefs while the latter refer to the aspects of social organization such as social participation or social networks. In this study, we also use this framework to choose the indicators of social capital” (from line 95 to line 99). From line 178 to line 183, we stated that “For structural social capital, questions such as the quantity and frequency of organization participation, the number of relatives and friends and the occupations of them, relationships and mutual aid between neighborhoods were included. For cognitive social capital, the questions whether the respondents trust in villagers or leaders in the village were included to measure the dimension of trust and reciprocity.” And from table 2, we can see the questions corresponding to different dimensions of social capital.

In this study, we selected some commonly used questions and adapted to the Chinese context. We conducted factor analysis in order to investigate the factor patterns of different dimensions of social capital.

For the measurement of social capital, we stated that “Measurements of social capital vary among countries, regions, researchers and different populations. There is no consensus about which methods are the most appropriate to measure this multidimensional concept. The measurements should also consider cultural factors and the characteristics of the society. Sun performed factor analysis to extract social capital factors, which included social participation, reciprocity and social support, trust and safety, interpersonal relationship network and
neighborhood cohesion. Yip used the number of organizations to which the respondent belongs as the structural social capital and “trust” as the cognitive social capital. Following literatures and similar studies in China, some commonly used measures such as social participation, trust, personal networks are taken as proxy measures in our study”.

(from line 100 to line 109)