Author’s response to reviews

Title: The interplay between individual social behavior and clinical symptoms in small clustered groups

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed the revised version of the manuscript “The interplay between individual social behavior and clinical symptoms in small clustered groups” (Ref. INFD-D-16-01715R1).

We thank you for the feedback on the manuscript and the opportunity to resubmit our work to BMC Infectious Diseases. We are grateful to the reviewers for their positive comments on the manuscript and their detailed reports that helped to make the manuscript clearer and more accurate. Please note that in the new version of the manuscript all reviewers comments have been addressed according to the suggestions provided. We enclose here after our point-by-point response to comments and remarks of the Reviewer#1, explaining the corresponding changes made in the manuscript.

We dare to hope that the manuscript is now suitable for publication in BMC Infectious Diseases.

Sincerely yours,

Piero Poletti

on behalf of all the authors (Roberto Visintainer, Bruno Lepri, Stefano Merler)
Response to Reviewers

We are extremely grateful to both the reviewers for their thorough assessment of the manuscript and their general appreciation of our work. We think that their remarks and comments truly helped us in considerably improving our manuscript.

Detailed reply to Reviewer#1 (Ngai Sze Wong, PhD)

Thanks for the big effort on addressing the comments. I have only 3 minor comments (optional) for authors' consideration.

1. Thanks for including SD in RESULTS. But the SD for "at least 1.29 hour per day in social interactions with individuals sleeping at the dormitory (sd 0.91 see Fig.2d)." (lines 135-136) might not be needed as it's not a mean, but a min value ("at least 1.29 hour). You may consider removing this SD.

The number provided was actually a mean value, for which SD would be useful as well. Previous wording “at least” was a residual typo in the manuscript, which has been now removed. Please note that the sentence now reads as follows:

“However, when the dynamic proximity network is considered, it emerges that, on average, a study participant had contact with 10 other individuals per day (sd 6.12, see Fig.2b), spending on average 5.18 minutes per contact per day (sd 2.98 see Fig.2c) and 1.29 hour per day in social interactions with individuals sleeping at the dormitory (sd 0.91 see Fig.2d).” (Results: lines 133-136)

2. lines 184-187 about wash-out period seems to be limitation instead of study results. See if you will move them to limitation under DISCUSSION section.

We followed the reviewer suggestion and moved this period to the Discussion (lines 231-234)

3. In DISCUSSION, third paragraph, authors highlighted the role of silent spreaders, which is nice. However, the former part (lines 204-210) seems to support that silent spreaders acts an important role, while the latter part (lines 210-212) showed that silent spreaders are less important. I am a bit confused. Were you saying that silent spreaders acts an important role, though the significance is smaller than symptomatic individuals? Would be great if the stand could be clearer, e.g. deleting "also" in line 210.
Addressed, by deleting the word “also” (see line 217 in the Discussion of the new version of the manuscript)