Author’s response to reviews

Title: Spatio-temporal analysis of the relationship between meteorological factors and hand-foot-mouth disease in Beijing, China

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Manuscript Title: Spatio-temporal analysis of the relationship between meteorological factors and hand-foot-mouth disease in Beijing, China

Dear editors,

We appreciated the great help and efforts which the editors and the reviewers have given to our manuscript. The editors and reviewers’ comments and suggestions were incorporated into the revised manuscript. We believe we have adequately addressed all excellent points and questions raised by the editors and reviewers below, and in the revised manuscript.

We provided both a clean copy as well as a copy using track changes. A point-to-point response to the comments and suggestions is detailed below. References used in the response were listed in the last part of responses to each reviewer.
All authors declare that they have no potential competing interests regarding the revised submitted manuscript. They also have read the revised manuscript and agree the work is ready for submission to the BMC Infectious Diseases, and accept responsibility for the manuscript’s contents.

Thank you very much for your consideration!

Sincerely yours,

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We would like to thank the reviewers for their helpful comments. The followings are our response to the reviewers’ comments point by point.

Response to the comments of Reviewer 1:

Pamela Palasanthiran, MBBS, MD, FRACP (Reviewer 1): Thank you for the revisions and for your considerations of the feedback. The supplementary data including the table comparing studies is a good addition. Note: in my version of the download, in the supplementary table comparing the studies - the first and last lines of the the data under "Meteorological factors studied" - it is difficult at times to work out which study was being referenced (as there is no clear separation between the studies. If it is a formatting issue, the expectation is that this will be better formatted in print version)
Thank you for the suggestion! We have checked the supplementary table and adjusted the format of the table in the revised supplementary material.

If I could respectfully suggest some minor rewording of some of your paragraphs for clarity and ease of reading? All in the DISCUSSION section. Thank you

Thank you very much for the suggestions! The followings are our response to the comments and revision lists point by point.

1) Discussion section, paragraph 4 : Suggest revise sentence to

"On the other hand, children spend more time with indoor activities in confined spaces during windy periods, which would increase the chances of EV transmission, a possible indirect explanation supporting the association of increased transmission with windy conditions."

Thank you for the suggestion! We have revised the sentence to the suggested one in the revised manuscript. (Page 11, Line 22-27)

Note: this is a relatively plausible explanation for the indirect effect of wind.. although one could ask why the same association with rainy days does not hold. ie. on rainy days kids stay indoor as well but in your study - there is no association with rain. This is just a comment. Not expecting any response.

Thank you very much for the comment!

2) Paragraph 5, toward the end of the para: Suggest revise to:

Compared with the study conducted by Dong et al., we found that sunshine hours was also positively associated with HFMD incidence.

Thank you for the suggestion! We have revised the sentence to the suggested one in the revised manuscript. (Page 12, Line 58-60)
3) Paragraph 5, last sentence: Suggest:

The threshold effect of precipitation on HFMD incidence might be the reason for the discordant conclusions.

Thank you for the suggestion! We have revised the sentence to the suggested one in the revised manuscript. (Page 13, Line 1-3)

4) Paragraph 6: First long sentence: Suggest amend to

Demographic and socio-economic characteristics which include child population density, Gross Domestic Product per capita, number of health agencies, proportion of children in nursery, and proportion of children in primary school might be confounders affecting the incidence of HFMD.

Thank you for the suggestion! We have revised the sentence to the suggested one in the revised manuscript. (Page 13, Line 5-10)

Response to the comments of Reviewer 2:

Ping-Ing Lee (Reviewer 2): The definitions "severe cases" should be described in the "Methods" section. The definition may be added to "HFMD data" section in "Methods."

Thank you for the suggestion! We have added the description of “severe cases” in the "HFMD data" section of "Methods" in the revised manuscript. (Page 7, Line 41-45)