Author’s response to reviews

Title: Contamination by respiratory viruses on outer surface of medical masks used by hospital healthcare workers

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Contamination by respiratory viruses on outer surface of medical masks used by hospital healthcare workers

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BMC Infectious Diseases
Dear Dr. Rudra

Thank you for the opportunity to revise our paper. We have revised it according to reviewers’ and editor’s comments, and attach the revised version and a response to the reviewers’ comments. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any further clarification.

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Sen Pei, Ph.D. (Reviewer 1):

1. One weak point in this study is that it’s unclear whether the respiratory viruses are from healthcare workers. However, given the large variations of infection probability in different types of wards, it is unlikely that all viruses came from the background/baseline infection. This is clearly not a perfect solution to the issue, but authors may want to add these discussions.

Reply: As suggested by the reviewer, we have added following statement in the discussion section, ...................However, given the large variations of infection probability in different types of wards, it is unlikely that all viruses came from the background infection”. Please see lines 299 and 300.

Editor Comments:

1. Please address the discretionary comments provided by reviewer 1. These can be found below.

Reply: We have included this in the discussion.

2. Please format your abstract under the following headings:

• Background
• Methods
• Results
• Conclusions
• Keywords
More information on what should be included in these sections can be found at https://bmcinfectdis.biomedcentral.com/submission-guidelines/preparing-your-manuscript/research-article

Reply: We have formatted the abstract accordingly.

3. Please confirm whether informed consent, written or verbal, was obtained from all participants and clearly state this in your "Ethics and Consent to Participate" section. If verbal, please state the reason and whether the ethics committee approved this procedure.

Reply: Written consent was taken from all participants. We have mentioned in the Ethics and Consent to Participate section that “Written consent as obtained from all participants.

4. Please amend the statement in the "Consent for publication" section, as this refers to consent obtained to publish potentially-identifying information (of patients/participants). If your manuscript does not contain any individual person’s identifiable data or information, please state “Not applicable” under this section.

Reply: We have made suggested changes. Please see line 349.

5. In the “Funding” section of your declarations, please clarify the role of the funding body in the design of the study and collection, analysis, and interpretation of data and in writing the manuscript.

Reply: We have added that, “funding body has no role in design of the study and collection, analysis, and interpretation of data and in writing the manuscript”. Please see lines 364 and 365.

6. Please remove the response to reviewers’ comments letter, as it is no longer needed at this stage. Please do not upload a new letter with this revision.

Reply: The letter has been removed.

7. At this stage, 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.
Reply: Final document has been uploaded.