Author’s response to reviews
Title: A study of the relationship between human infection with avian influenza A (H5N6) and environmental avian influenza viruses in Fujian, China

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Version: 1 Date: 07 May 2019

Author’s response to reviews:

Dear editor,

Thank you for your letter regarding our manuscript titled “A study of the relationship between human infection with avian influenza A (H5N6) and environmental avian influenza viruses in Fujian, China”. (Manuscript number: INFD-D-19-00379)

We appreciate the comments and suggestions from the reviewer, which were very helpful to improve the manuscript. The responses, and explanations related to their comments are listed below:
Editor Comments:

Please copyedit your manuscript to improve the quality of the written English. We suggest that you ask a native English-speaking colleague to help you with this, or to consider using a professional service. If you can not improve this to a level that we feel is suitable for publication, we may not be able to consider your manuscript for publication further.

Response: Thanks for your suggestions. We feel sorry for our poor writings, however, we do invite a friend of us who is a native English speaker from USA help polish our article. Due to our friend’s help, the article was edited extensively. And we hope the revised manuscript could be acceptable for you.

Reviewer reports:

Major Issues:

1- The surveillance procedures are not properly described. Authors need to provide the details of how, when, where the samples were collected. Also, just stating environmental sampling is highly ambiguous and need sufficient details to allow proper evaluation of the work.

Response:

We are very grateful to your comments and thoughtful suggestion. We have modified in the revised manuscript. (Methods section, line 108-118)

2- Another major issue is the use of chi-square for the statistical analysis when clearly some of the cells had a zero, a non-exact test should be used instead.

Response:

We thank you very much for your comments for pointing out this omission. Now, a non-exact test was used instead. The results are presented in Table1.

3- Also, there seems to be a lot more influenza A detected than the reported H5s. The authors need to present the data on the non-H5 viruses.

Response:
We thank the reviewer for the kind comment. The non-H5 viruses are presented in Supplementary Table1.

Minor issues:
A quick revision to get rid of typos and other grammatical mistakes is needed. Background:
1- The first sentence is irrelevant as the H5N6 from the 70s has nothing to do with modern HPAI H5.
Response:
Thank you. We have made the revision.

2- Line 88-89: Sentence needs rephrasing.
Response:
Thank you. We have made the revision.

3- Line 92-93: Rephrase to state that cases had contact with infected poultry.
Response:
Thank you. We have now made the revisions.

4- Table 1: Replace no. of surveillance with no. so samples
Response:
Thank you. We have now made the revision.

5- Discussion: Since the viruses detected were HPAI, what were the observed signs and symptoms and mortality rates among poultry
Response:
Sorry, the information of signs, symptoms and mortality rates among poultry are unavailable.

Once again, we acknowledge your comments very much, which are valuable in improving the quality of our manuscript. We hope that the updated manuscript will be found suitable for publication in the BMC Infectious Diseases.

Yours Sincerely

Ping Chen