Author’s response to reviews

Title: Lessons from an active surveillance pilot to assess the Pneumonia of Unknown Etiology Surveillance System in China, 2016: the need to increase clinician participation in the detection and reporting of emerging respiratory infectious diseases

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Response: Thank you for your suggestions. We have added the information as required.

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Reviewer reports:

Fiona Russell (Reviewer 1): The authors have addressed my queries. However, there needs to be more discussion about how to modify the system to make it feasible. From the literature, what have others done to make it a functional system with regards to the number of cases being reported so as not to overwhelm the system.

Response: Thank you for your suggestion. There are few systems like the PUE system, so it is difficult to cite examples from the literature of how to modify the system to make it more feasible. We believe that adding epidemiological criteria to the case definition may make it more specific and hopefully would also serve as a prompt for clinicians to report cases. We have added a sentence suggesting a possible modification (Discussion section, Line 398-402, Page 17) "Finally, since the majority of hospitals in China now use electronic medical records system, if exposure data were collected systematically as part of these systems, it is possible that cases with relevant epidemiological data could be automatically flagged for reporting. Further
investigations would be needed to assess these modifications to see if they have a positive impact on case reporting without overwhelming the PUE system.” As we stated, while these modifications may improve the system, we would need to conduct an evaluation to determine the effect of those modifications on case reporting.

Table 1 is confusing. It is not clear what constitutes the numerator and denominator to calculate the %.

Using the first row of results as an example, 1) What is the numerator to calculate 49% 2) the ARI admissions matching the PUE case definition should be 167/1274

First column header, add: "Total number of ARI..."; and it is not clear what the % refers to in the brackets, currently is reads "Total ARI admissions (% total ARI admissions)

In the second column header add" "Number of ARI admissions..."

Response: Thank you for your suggestions. We have revised the row headings. The nominator is the number in different department, and the denominator is the number in the hospital.

If improvements to the English language within your manuscript have been requested, you should have your manuscript reviewed by someone who is fluent in English. If you would like professional help in revising this manuscript, you can use any reputable English language editing service. We can recommend our affiliates Nature Research Editing Service (http://bit.ly/NRES_BS ) and American Journal Experts (http://bit.ly/AJE_BS ) for help with English usage. Please note that use of an editing service is neither a requirement nor a guarantee of publication. Free assistance is available from our English language tutorial (https://www.springer.com/gb/authors-editors/authorandreviewertutorials/writinginenglish ) and our Writing resources (http://www.biomedcentral.com/getpublished/writing-resources ). These cover common mistakes that occur when writing in English.

Response: Thank you for your suggestions. We have polished the English language by the authors who is fluent in English.