Author's response to reviews

Title: Independent and combined effects of environmental factors and CYP2C19 polymorphisms on the risk of esophageal squamous cell carcinoma in Fujian province of China

Authors:

Xian e Peng (fmuxe@163.com)
Hua Fang Chen (chf276@163.com)
zhi jian Hu (hzi99955888@126.com)
Xi Shun Shi (fydsxs@163.com)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
5 January 2015
Mr Ervin Cenzon
BMC Medical Genetics
Dear Mr Cenzon

Enclosed here with for your consideration is the revised version of our manuscript (Manuscript ID: 4667233331437116) entitled "Independent and combined effects of environmental factors and CYP2C19 polymorphisms on the risk of esophageal squamous cell carcinoma in Fujian province of China ". We appreciate the points made by the reviewers and we are in general in agreement that modifications along the lines that they recommended would strengthen our paper. Accordingly, we have revised the manuscript and provide below point-by-point responses regarding their suggestions.

The correct or added descriptions were shown in the revised manuscript in red font.

We hope that our manuscript is now acceptable, but please let me know if we can provide further information.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely yours,
Xian-e Peng  M.D. & Ph.D.
Department of Epidemiology and Health Statistics
School of Public Health
Fujian Medical University
88 Jiaotong Road
Fuzhou 350004, Fujian
P.R. China
Phone: +86-591-83303325
E-mail: fmuxe@163.com
Reviewers' comments:

Reviewer #1:

Major comments:

Q1. The usual definition for smoker is “Respondents who reported smoking at least 100 cigarettes in their lifetime”. However, the authors used their own definition which cannot correctly distinguishing smoker/non-smoker and also make it difficult to compare their results with other studies. The authors should re-define smoker/non-smoker with the usual definition and use it in the multivariate analysis. There are same problems for the definitions of alcohol and tea drinkers.

A: Many thanks for reviewer’s suggestion. According to the definitions of other studies, we had re-defined the definitions of smoker, alcohol and tea drinkers, and had clarified in the revised manuscript (page 7).

Q2. It is unclear why five factors were adjusted in the regression models in Table 2. Some of them are non-risk factors for ESCC, while some known risk factors (e.g. smoking status, tea drinking) were not adjusted in the analysis. In addition, some non-risk factors showed significant associations with ESCC risk in Table 1, but lack of reasonable explanations in the manuscript.

A: Many thanks for reviewer’s suggestion. Actually, on the basis of prior knowledge, these five factors (e.g. age, gender, education level, incoming and job) may be potential confound factors, so they were included in the multivariate models. In addition, we had re-analyzed the adjusted odds ratios after controlling the potential confound factors (e.g. age, sex, marriage, education or incoming status, smoking
status, tea drinking and other risk factors), and the results were presented in the revised manuscript as table 2.

Minor Essential Revisions

Q 1. Please provided the exact P-values in Table 1-4 instead of “<0.05” or “0.000”.

A: Many thanks for reviewer’s suggestion. We had provided the exact P-values in Table 1-4 instead of “<0.05” or “0.000”.

Q 2. Too many groups for age variable in Table 1.

A: Many thanks for reviewer’s suggestion. We had categorized the age variable as two groups (e.g. <50 years and ≥50 years), and we had amended in Table 1.

Q 3. Table 3 should be re-organized to make it readable and source population should be noted for the data from dbSNP.

A: Many thanks for reviewer’s suggestion. We had re-organized the Table 3 and noted the source population for the data from dbSNP.

Reviewer #2

Minor comments:

Q 1. As we all known, environmental factors play an important role in the etiology of ESCC. Thus, authors of this manuscript would feel more comfortable if the location of the patients being studied is added to the title instead of simply mentioning “a Chinese population”.

A: Many thanks for reviewer’s suggestion. We had added the location of the patients being studied to the title.
Q 2. Many of the References are from over 10 years ago. Information the authors cited from them are out of date already. Authors are needed to get more updated supportive references.

A: We appreciate the reviewer’s comment, and have updated our references.

Q 3. English needs to be edited. Overall the submitted manuscript is of good quality, but still needs some revisions before it gets accepted.

A: Many thanks for reviewer’s suggestion. We had edited English.