Author’s response to reviews

Title: Meta-analysis of associations of vascular endothelial growth factor protein levels and -634G/C polymorphism with systemic lupus erythematosus susceptibility

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Version: 1 Date: 16 Dec 2018

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Response to the reviewers

Dear Ping An, M.D., MPH and reviewers,

We are hereby submitting our manuscript entitled, “Meta-analysis of associations of vascular endothelial growth factor protein levels and -634G/C polymorphism with systemic lupus erythematosus susceptibility” (Manuscript ID: MGTC-D-18-00492) as a new submission. In the past several days, all of the authors participated in revising this manuscript. We have fully addressed the comments of the reviewers. We hereby provide our point-by-point responses to all of the concerns as detailed below.

Editor Comments:

These issues need to be addressed:


Response: Thank you very much for your suggestion. We have revised the title according to your suggestion.
2. For fig 1-3, you used scale of -100, 0 and 100 for mean difference; however, most of data points are way out of these range and arrows were used, thus the forest plots do not reflect the true data points. Use a scale cover most data points.

Response: Thank you very much for your care. However, the figure 1-2 were generated by the software of Cochrane Review Manager Version 5, and we can not edit the scale. Thanks again!

3. Fig 4, the scale used for OR is too large.

Response: Thank you very much for your care. However, the figure 1-2 were generated by the software of Cochrane Review Manager Version 5, and we can not edit the scale. Thanks again!

4. Figure legends should interpret more information, e.g. mean difference, analysis, OR, CI, I2, total etc.

Response: Thank you very much for your care. We have added them in the revised manuscript. However, lots of previous meta-analysis did not provide them in the text or figure note. It might not affect the readers to understand them. Thanks again!

5. Table 1. add a note to explain “control”

Response: We check the information of “control” in Table 1 and found that the control group of the included studies were healthy controls, and not hospital-based control. We have added the note for Table 1 as follows: SD: standard deviation; N: the total number of SLE group or control group; Control: healthy controls. Thank you very much!

6. Explain Why mean VEGF levels vary so dramatically among studies in discussion. Whether this affect the validity of the results.

Response: In common, the difference of dosage unit was an important source for mean VEGF levels vary so dramatically among studies. However, we checked the included studies and found all the dosage unit for VEGF was pg/ml in all the included studies. We suspected the VEGF levels vary so dramatically among studies was caused by the different test kits or different test equipment. We have added this information in the Discussion. Thanks again for your suggestion.

7. L56. The statement “The P < 0.05 was required for the overall OR to be statistically significant” is incorrect. Consider Changing to: a p-value of 5% or lower was considered to be statistically significant.

Response: We have revised this sentence according to your suggestion. Thanks again!
Yours sincerely,

Wenzhuang Tang, et al.