Author’s response to reviews

Title: Association of the MMP-9 polymorphism and ischemic stroke risk in southern Chinese Han population

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear editors and reviewers:

Thank you for letter and for the reviewers’ comments concerning our manuscript entitled “Association of the MMP-9 polymorphism and ischemic stroke risk in southern Chinese Han population” (ID: NURL-D-18-00613R1). Those comments are all valuable and helpful for revising and improving our paper, as well as the important guiding significance to our researcher. We have studied comments carefully and have made correction which we hope meet with approval. Revised portion are marked in red in the paper. The main corrections in the paper and the responds to the reviewer’s comments are as flowing:

Responds to the reviewer’s comments:

Reviewer 2:

Response to comment:

1. The authors have already described the inclusion and exclusion criteria section in more detail. The point is that they excluded all patients with some complications including hypertension and diabetes. This means they excluded all patients with hypertension or diabetes, so how is it possible? We know most of the stroke patients in daily practice will have some risk factors, such
as hypertension or diabetes. If the authors stated correctly, how many years or months did it cost to enroll 250 stroke patients from the hospital? Please clarify!

Response: Thanks for the reviewer’s good evaluation and kind suggestion. Through consulting data, we found that part of the patients with ischemic stroke do have some risk factors, such as high blood pressure or diabetes. Our statement on exclusion criteria for ischemic stroke patient selection is not accurate enough in the manuscript. So we revised the exclusion standard of ischemic stroke patients in the study participants section of the revised manuscript. Our study consisted of 250 stroke patients, who were consecutively recruited between January 2015 and January 2018 at the Haikou Hospital affiliated to Xiangya Medical College of Central South University, and highlighted in red in the revised version.

2. I think "Controls were recruited at the same time as IS patients" is impossible. It should be stated precisely.

Response: Thanks for the reviewer’s suggestion. The Study participant part of the revised manuscript has accurately explained the recruitment time and place of the control group and marked them in red. Controls identified through the annual health assessment were recruited from the same hospital physical examination center between January 2015 and October 2017.

3. The current meaning of the running title could be misunderstand as studying the association of serum MMP-9 level with ischemic stroke. It's better to be revised accordingly, such as "Association between MMP-9 SNPs and Ischemic stroke risk". Response: Thanks for the reviewer’s suggestion. The running title of the revised manuscript has been changed to "Association between MMP-9 SNPs and Ischemic stroke risk ", which is marked in red.

4. I still think the language of the whole manuscript is a problem.

Response: Thanks for the reviewer’s kind advice. We have modified the previous manuscript through the language retouching service of “Bio Science” institution. In the revised manuscript, we have further modified the manuscript according to the comments of reviewers.

Thank you and best regards.

Yours sincerely,

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