Author's response to reviews

Title: The association between human papillomavirus 16 and esophageal cancer in Chinese population: a meta-analysis

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Dr. Marshall,

We are writing to resubmit our manuscript “The association between human papillomavirus 16 and esophageal cancer in Chinese population: a meta-analysis” to *BMC Cancer*.

The manuscript has been revised and edited according to the constructive comments from reviewers after iterative internal discussion within coauthors of the manuscript. We are grateful to the reviewers for their meticulous review. We respect their opinions and perspective, and have attached a point-to-point response to the questions they raised. All of the questions and concerns have been carefully addressed in a way that corresponding revisions and additional inputs are made in the manuscript (which are also appended below).

We hope that with revisions our manuscript will be acceptable for publication in *BMC cancer*. We are open to any further comment on our manuscript and look forward to your decision at your earliest convenience.

Thanks!

Sincerely,

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Response to reviewers

Reviewer 1
This is a well written paper and the methods and results are very clearly presented. In the paper, the authors investigate the association between HPV 16 infection and esophageal cancer in China, providing valuable information on this unclear association in Chinese population. The discussion of this paper is accurately explained. It provides interesting insights for the general reader and is very strong. It is particularly useful they have highlighted the implications for the prevention and treatment of esophageal cancer in future. However, one suggestion is that the authors should give more references or details on the prognostic value of the HPV 16 status in patients with esophageal cancer, which will be more interesting for the wider reader.
Response:
Thanks for the suggestion. We have added references on the prognostic value of HPV status in patients with esophageal cancer (Please see line 262-268).

Reviewer 2
This manuscript provides important population based data on the association of HPV and esophageal cancer.
I would suggest minor essential revisions to this manuscript as listed:
1. Several errors in English grammar require correction throughout the manuscript.
Response:
Sorry for the errors. The grammar has been checked by a native-English speaker.
2. The statement in line 271 should be changed from "no heterogeneity, no evidence of publication bias..." to minimal or minor heterogeneity and publication bias.
Response:
Thanks for your comment. We have changed the sentence according to your suggestion.
3. Please clarify the third limitation starting on line 289. What are the reasons this was not investigated?
Response:
Thanks for your comment. We have added the reason as follows: Thirdly, we mainly focused on the association between HPV 16 and esophageal cancer in this study and did not investigate the overall HPV risk on esophageal cancer which is essential for esophageal cancer prevention in China.