Author's response to reviews

Title: The prognostic significance of lymphovascular invasion in patients with resectable gastric cancer: a large retrospective study from southern China

Authors:

Peng Li (lipeng@sysucc.org.cn)
Hao-Qiang He (hehq@sysucc.org.cn)
Chong-Mei Zhu (zhuzhm@sysucc.org.cn)
Yi-Hong Ling (lingyh@sysucc.org.cn)
Wan-Ming Hu (huwm@sysucc.org.cn)
Xin-Ke Zhang (zhangxk@sysucc.org.cn)
Rong-Zhen Luo (luorz@sysucc.org.cn)
Jing-Ping Yun (yunjp@sysucc.org.cn)
Dan Xie (xiedan@sysucc.org.cn)
Yuan-Fang Li (livanf@sysucc.org.cn)
Mu-Yan Cai (caimuyan@hotmail.com)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Title: The prognostic significance of lymphovascular invasion in patients with resectable gastric cancer: a large retrospective study from southern China

Dear Mr. Ryan Relox and Dr. Wei Jiang,
Thank you for reviewing the above-referenced manuscript submitted earlier to your office. We would like to take this chance to express our appreciation to you. In accord with the Editor's comments, the manuscript has been revised accordingly, and the changes have been highlighted with red ink in the revised manuscript. We feel that the revised manuscript has been strengthened by the Editor's suggestions and comments, and we are very appreciated of your time and effort. A point-by-point response to the Editor's comments and suggestions has been prepared and follows this cover letter.
The format for our revised manuscript has been properly prepared and conforms to BMC Cancer style.
If there are any questions or problems for our revised manuscript, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Mu-Yan Cai, M.D., PhD.,
Department of Pathology,
Sun Yat-sen University Cancer Center,
No. 651, Dongfeng Road East, Guangzhou, 510060 China
Tel: 86-20-87342269; Fax: 86-20-87343268
Email: caimuyan@hotmail.com
Response to comments of the Editor

1. In the abstract as well as the material and methods, it was stated that the patients were “randomly selected”, however, selection criteria were listed. If all patients who meet the criteria were selected, then it was not “random”. Please clarify. Also, what is the percentage of the study cohort with respect to the entire GC patients who underwent surgery during that time period?

Reply: Thanks for the Editor's correction. Indeed, 1148 GC patients were included in our study, based on the selection criteria listed in the “Materials and methods” section. The term “randomly” has been deleted in our revised “Abstract” as well as “Materials and methods” section. In addition, the percentage of the study cohort was 34.6% in the entire GC patients who underwent surgery between May 1996 and June 2009. This information has been clearly clarified in our revised manuscript (See the 49th to 50th lines of page 3 and the 130th to 131st of page 6 in the revised manuscript).

2. Page 7, “the disease-free survival (DFS) was defined as the time from surgery to recurrence or death from gastric cancer (GC), whichever came first.” should be “to recurrence/metastasis or death from gastric cancer”.

Reply: In accord with the Editor's suggestion, the sentence “the disease-free survival (DFS) was defined as the time from surgery to recurrence or death from gastric cancer (GC), whichever came first” has been replaced by “the disease-free survival (DFS) was defined as the time from surgery to recurrence/metastasis or death from gastric cancer (GC), whichever came first” (See the 156th to158th lines of page 8 in the revised manuscript).

3. Page 8, “All samples were anonymised”. Did you mean “All specimens were de-identified”? Or the cases were reviewed blind to patient details?

Reply: The sentence "All samples were anonymised" means "the cases were reviewed blind to patient details”. In light with the Editor's comment, the sentence has been changed to "All cases were reviewed blind to patient details" (See the 161st to162nd lines of page 8 in the revised manuscript). Thank you!
4. Page 5, line 6, “despite of” should be “in spite of”.

Reply: In accord with the Editor's suggestion, “despite of” has been changed to “in spite of” (See the 94th line of page 5 in the revised manuscript).

5. Page 6, line 1, “LVI has been found to be a high risk for cancer recurrence” should be “LVI has been shown to be associated with high recurrence rate”.

Reply: In accord with the Editor's suggestion, the sentence “LVI has been found to be a high risk for cancer recurrence” has been replaced by “LVI has been shown to be associated with high recurrence rate” (See the 111st to 112nd lines of page 6 in the revised manuscript).

6. Page 6, 2nd paragraph, “retrospective study of GC patients underwent surgery in Southern China” should be “retrospective study of GC patients who underwent surgery in Southern China”.

Reply: In accord with the Editor's suggestion, the sentence “retrospective study of GC patients underwent surgery in Southern China” has been changed to “retrospective study of GC patients who underwent surgery in Southern China” (See the 123rd to 124th lines of page 6 in the revised manuscript).

7. Page 6, last sentence, “no adjuvant treatment before operation” should be “no neoadjuvant treatment before operation”.

Reply: In accord with the Editor's suggestion, the sentence “no adjuvant treatment before operation” has been changed to “no neoadjuvant treatment before operation” (See the 134th to 135th lines of page 7 in the revised manuscript).

8. Page 7, 1st paragraph, “incised margin” should be “resection margins”.

Reply: In light with the Editor's suggestion, the term “incised margin” has been replaced by “resection margins” (See the 135th line of page 7 in the revised manuscript).
9. Page 7, “the serum concentrations above respective cut-off value” can be changed to “the serum concentrations above the respective cut-off values”.

Reply: In light with the Editor's correction, the sentence “the serum concentrations above respective cut-off value” has been changed to “the serum concentrations above the respective cut-off values” (See the 149th to150th lines of page 7 in the revised manuscript).

10. Page 8, “most of whom were deceased, since this was not deemed necessary by the Ethics Committee, who waived the need for consent.” Please change to “and most of whom were deceased, therefore this was not deemed necessary by the Ethics Committee, who waived the need for consent.”

Reply: In light with the Editor's suggestion, the sentence “most of whom were deceased, since this was not deemed necessary by the Ethics Committee, who waived the need for consent” has been changed to “and most of whom were deceased, therefore this was not deemed necessary by the Ethics Committee, who waived the need for consent” (See the 164th to166th lines of page 8 in the revised manuscript).

11. Page 8, I am not sure what “identical strict criteria” means, please either specify or delete this part.

Reply: Thank you for the Editor's suggestion, “identical strict criteria” has been deleted (See the 175th to176th lines of page 8 in the revised manuscript).

12. Page 9, “Particular attention was taken toward artifacts due to peritumoral edema and tissue shrinkage.” This sentence can be deleted.

Reply: Thank you for the Editor's suggestion, the sentence “Particular attention was taken toward artifacts due to peritumoral edema and tissue shrinkage” has been deleted (See the 183rd to185th lines of page 9 in the revised manuscript).

13. Page 9, “differences between the patient groups were tested by the log-rank test in univariate analysis”, change “tested” to “analyzed”.
Reply: According to the Editor's correction, the word “tested” has been changed to “analyzed” (See the 194th line of page 9 in the revised manuscript).

14. Page 10, “the existence of tumor emboli” change to “the presence of tumor emboli”.

Reply: According to the Editor's suggestion, the sentence “the existence of tumor emboli” has been changed to “the presence of tumor emboli” (See the 208th line of page 10 in the revised manuscript).

15. Page 10, “$P = 0.004$ for CA19-9” change to “$P = 0.004$ for CA19-9 level”; “gender, age, and CEA” change to “gender, age, and CEA level”, please also change others in the text.

Reply: Thank you for the Editor's suggestion, “$P = 0.004$ for CA19-9” has been changed to “$P = 0.004$ for CA19-9 level”; “gender, age, and CEA” has been changed to “gender, age, and CEA level”. Additionally, similar change has been made in the text (See the 217th line of page 10, the 219th line of page 10 and the 243rd line of page 12 in the revised manuscript).

16. Page 12, “promoting it incorporated into” should be “promoting it being incorporated into”.

Reply: In accord with the Editor's correction, “promoting it incorporated into” has been replaced by “promoting it being incorporated into” (See the 264th line of page 12 in the revised manuscript).

17. Page 13, “applied into detecting LVI in the literatures” should be “applied to detect LVI in the literature”.

Reply: In accord with the Editor's correction, the sentence “applied into detecting LVI in the literatures” has been replaced by “applied to detect LVI in the literature” (See the 284th line of page 13 in the revised manuscript).
18. Page 14, “In accordance with the precious studies”, “precious” should be “previous”.

Reply: Thank you for the Editor's correction, in the sentence “In accordance with the precious studies”, the word “precious” has been changed to “previous” (See the 295th line of page 14 in the revised manuscript).


Reply: In light with the Editor's suggestion, the sentence “cohort of 1148 patients with gastric adenocarcinoma underwent gastrectomy” has been changed to “cohort of 1148 patients with gastric adenocarcinoma who underwent gastrectomy” (See the 308th line of page 14 in the revised manuscript).

20. Page 16, “As we known” should be “As we know”.

Reply: In accord with the Editor's correction, “As we known” has been changed to “As we know” (See the 336th line of page 16 in the revised manuscript).

21. Page 16, “the prognosis of patients with GC in Asian” should be “in Asia”.

Reply: In accord with the Editor's correction, in the sentence “the prognosis of patients with GC in Asian”, the word “in Asian” has been changed to “in Asia” (See the 348th line of page 16 in the revised manuscript).

22. Page 17, “have abundant experience in surgery skills” change to “have abundant surgical experience”, although this is purely speculative and anecdotal at best.

Reply: Thank you for the Editor's suggestion, the sentence “have abundant experience in surgery skills” has been changed to “have abundant surgical experience” (See the 357th line of page 17 in the revised manuscript).
23. Page 17, “However, large-scale, perfectly prospective studies, is needed to further validate our results.” Change to “However, large-scale prospective studies are needed to further validate our results”.

**Reply:** Thank you for the Editor’s correction, the sentence “However, large-scale, perfectly prospective studies, is needed to further validate our results” has been replaced by “However, large-scale prospective studies are needed to further validate our results” (See the 363rd to 364th lines of page 17 in the revised manuscript).

24. Page 17, “The examination of LVI, detected by routine H&E staining,” change to “The examination of LVI by routine H&E staining”.

**Reply:** In light with the Editor's suggestion, the sentence “The examination of LVI, detected by routine H&E staining,” has been replaced by “The examination of LVI by routine H&E staining” (See the 367th line of page 17 in the revised manuscript).