Author’s response to reviews

Title: A hypothesized TNM staging system based on the number and location of positive lymph nodes may better reflect the prognosis for patients with NSCLC

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear editor,

Thank you for your letter. And Thanks for your kindness in offering us such a precious opportunity to improve our manuscript entitled “A hypothesized TNM staging system based on the number and location of positive lymph nodes may better reflect the prognosis for patients with NSCLC” (BCAN-D-18-03229R1). I am glad to know that our manuscript is acceptable for publication in BMC cancer and minor revisions. We have revised the manuscript according to the reviewers’ and editor’s suggestions. And our point-to-point response to the reviewers’ comments are as follows:

Best regards!

Sincerely

Xiaoling Shang

Responses to comments of editor

Question 1: Thank you for providing an Ethics and consent for participation statement for your Declarations section, if you did not need formal ethics approval please confirm under the heading that the waiving of the need for ethical approval in this context complies with national guidelines and provide a reference which supports this. Alternatively, please supply a statement
that says that a local ethics committee ruled that no formal ethics approval was required in this particular case. When doing so, please include the specific name of the ruling committee. If formal ethical approval has been granted for your research then please clearly state so, along with the full unabbreviated name of the ruling ethical committee that granted approval.

Further, if consent for participation was not required, we ask that you please provide details in your Ethics statement of why this was waivered and the institution/committee that approved this. When doing so, please also state the full names of any relevant national or international regulations and guidelines which preclude the necessity for seeking formal consent in the context of conducting the research as presented in your manuscript.

Answer: Thanks for your efforts and comments concerning our manuscript. We have made amendments to this manuscript text in Declarations section, line 2, page 13.

Question 2: Thank you for providing an Availability of data and materials statement for the Declarations section. Please describe where the raw data generated/analysed during your study can be found. If you wish to share the data through correspondence then please include the statement “The datasets used and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.” If you do not wish to share your data, please state this along with the reason.

Answer: We feel great thanks for your work. And we have revised our manuscript in Declarations section, line 3, page 14.

Question 3: Please note that all authors should be named by using their initials rather than full names in the Authors’ contributions section. For example, author John Smith should be represented as JS in this section.

Answer: Thanks for your suggestion. We made amendments to this manuscript text in Declarations section, line 14, page 14.

Question 4: When submitting your revised manuscript please ensure you do so as a single clean copy without any tracked changes, colored or highlighted text, as these are no longer required at this stage of the editorial process.

Answer: Thanks for your suggestion. We submit our revised manuscript as a single clean copy without any tracked changes, colored or highlighted text. We also add the Authors’ information in Declaration section, line 1, page 15.

Responses to comments of reviewer 1
Question: Christine M Bestvina, MD (Reviewer 1): The authors did an excellent job and appropriately responded to all comments and inquiries. All of the required grammatical corrections have been made, and the paper now reads quite smoothly.

Answer: We feel great thanks for your professional review work on our article. I greatly appreciate your help concerning improvement to this manuscript.

Responses to comments of reviewer 2

Question: Andrew Arndt (Reviewer 2): I appreciate the revised draft. The manuscript is much more clearly written and has a more straightforward conclusion than in its initial presentation. The graphs are helpful as well. I would now favor publication.

Answer: Thank you very much for your affirmation and support of this manuscript. I should like to express my appreciation to you for suggesting how to improve our manuscript.