Author’s response to reviews

Title: Knowledge, Attitude and Status of Nitrite Inhalants Use Among Men Who Have Sex with Men in Tianjin China

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editors,

Thank you very much for your kind offer to consider a revised version of our manuscript. We are very grateful for the reviewers’ helpful and constructive suggestions, and we have revised the manuscript accordingly.

Below please find each of the reviewers’ comments followed by our response (indicated by an arrow).

Best regards,

Feng Zhou, M.D.
Responses to the comments from Reviewer 1:

While this paper presents some interesting material, the authors should consider additional discussion of the question of RUSH use and the observed HIV and other disease prevalence observed, i.e. why no relationship was found.

◊Done. (Page 9, lines 27; Page 10, lines 1-6, lines 18-23)

The statistical table that distinguishes RUSH use by characteristics would benefit from being reorganized, perhaps separate tables for demographics, disease prevalence etc.

◊We agree with your opinion. The table 3 was separated to table 3 and table 4.

The data is also a bit old, 2012 and some acknowledgement, that given the speed of change of internet based knowledge, this represents perhaps a baseline for future studies.

◊We agree with your opinion. We have added some discussion in study limitation. (Page 11, Lines 19-23).

Responses to the comments from Reviewer 2:

This paper addresses a very significant and rising concern in China and globally, specifically, the use of nitrite inhalants and other synthetic drugs among men who have sex with men (MSM), particularly during sexual encounters. This basic knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral cross-sectional survey of a convenience sample of MSM in Tianjin offers important data on the prevalence of use and knowledge about the drug and its health and other side effects and consequences in a population that is at high risk of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV and syphilis. The paper also provides preliminary information about factors associated with greater nitrite inhalant use among subpopulations of MSM. The study was well designed to recruit a convenience sample of MSM that might be generalizable to MSM in other Chinese cities, and data collection procedures were rigorous and designed with ethical considerations. Data analyses were also well designed and implemented.
While the paper is both significant and timely, given the rapid increase in use of these drugs and the implications of this use for public health, particularly the rising HIV and syphilis epidemics in China, the manuscript in its current form has significant problems that must be addressed.

First, the English language usage and grammar has many mistakes. It should be reviewed and edited carefully by a native English speaker to correct those errors. This is important and necessary before the paper should be published.

◊ The whole manuscript has been reviewed and edited by a professional translation company.

Second, the Background section could be expanded to provide more context for the problem of nitrite inhalant use in China, particularly studies of cities comparable to Tianjin, in addition to globally.

◊ We have shown it in background section and added it in reference. (Page 4, lines 3-11; Ref. 22,23,24)

Third, the Discussion section should be revised. The first paragraph is completely redundant with the Findings section and can be deleted. Instead, more attention should be given to the authors' interpretation and application of the findings. Specifically, they should comment further on possible reasons for the findings, their interpretations and understanding of the meaning of the findings, and possible explanations for associations among different factors and nitrite inhalant use. Some of this is already in the Discussion section, which is good, but it should be expanded.

◊ We have revised the discussion section and added discussion according to your suggestion. (Page 9, lines 4-11, line 27; Page10, lines 1-6, lines 18-23; Page 11, lines 6-9,lines 19-23)

The Conclusion section is also somewhat redundant. It should be expanded with other information about the full implications of the study findings and where research should go in the future.
We agree with you and rewrite the conclusion section. (Page 2, lines 22-27; Page 11, lines 26-27; Page 12, lines 1-3)