Author’s response to reviews

Title: Awareness, understanding and use of sodium information labelled on pre-packaged food in Beijing: a cross-sectional study

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Responses to Reviewers’ Comments
Dear Editor,
We are truly grateful to the reviewers’ careful modification and meaningful suggestions. We feel lucky that our manuscript went to these reviewers as the valuable comments from them not only helped us with the improvement of our manuscript, but suggested some neat ideas for future studies. Please do forward our heartfelt thanks to these experts. Based on the comments we received, careful modifications have been made to the Manuscript updated. All changes were marked in red text. We hope the new manuscript will meet your magazine’s standard. Below you will find our point-by-point responses to the reviewers’ comments/questions:

The whole text
1. Grammatical errors. After examining the reviewer’s comments carefully, we must admit that we did need to elaborate the English writing in the previous manuscript. Sorry for these grammatical errors. In the revised version, all grammatical errors had been modified according to the reviewers. Abstract section
2. Line 10, page 2. In the review comments, the reviewer has pointed out that “Not sure what you mean by ‘optimal level of awareness’”, so we added “supposing that people who live in a national capital are more aware of food labels than those living in other places of the same country” after “labelling”.

Background section
3. Line 3, page 4. As suggested by the reviewer, the terms 'sodium' and 'salt' are used interchangeably throughout the paper. It is recommended that one is picked and used throughout for consistency, and that the difference between salt and sodium is explained at the beginning of the paper so that the reader knows what the difference is to ensure it is clear from the outset, as it is not stated until the discussion. Considering that the participants were more familiar...
with “salt” than “sodium”, so we use “salt” more frequently in our questionnaire. Therefore we use “salt” to maintain consistency with the questionnaire when we described our results. However, in many cases, we need to clarify sodium or salt very clearly without any ambiguity, for example when we talk about the relationship between “sodium” and “salt”, and distinguish “sodium label” from “salt label”. To make the audience better understood, we added an explanation at the beginning of the paper—“Sodium differs from salt which is sodium chloride. To make it better understood, sodium intake/reduction are commonly expressed as salt intake/reduction.”.4. Line 22, page 4. As suggested by the reviewer, “expand on the point to explain why/how the food and retail industry is increasing the amount of salt people eat”. We changed the statement into “the sales and consumption of pre-packaged food are increasing very quickly and becoming an important source of sodium intake, especially in urban areas”.Method section5. Line 17, page 5. In the review comments, the reviewer questioned that “Why were these two separate groups of people chosen as participants?” We modified the statement into “The participants were chosen in central Beijing from two groups: community residents and supermarket shoppers cover different populations which may have difference in age, education and economic level.”.6. Line 20, page 5. The word “convenient” before “urban communities” has been deleted to avoid confusion. 7. Line 20, page 5. The reviewer questioned “Were the supermarkets all the same or were they different supermarket companies?” We made the clarification by changing the statement into “370 shoppers were selected at four supermarkets of different companies and scale from different neighborhoods”.8. Questionnaire design and definition section, Line 31, page 5. As suggested by the reviewer, we tried our best to cut this section down, and other points of this section raised by the reviewer had also been modified through the streamlined modification. And at the same time, a blank questionnaire as an appendix has been uploaded (See Appendix: Questionnaire for detail).9. Line 17, page 6. “Salt reduction behavior” has been defined and used to replace the phases—“behavior of salt intake/control towards salt intake/controlling salt intake in daily life” in the previous manuscript in order to eliminate the confusion.10. Line 22, page 6. Two sentences—“To achieve general estimations, the description of awareness, understanding and use of sodium labels was presented for the whole population, although significant differences in many aspects existed between community residents and supermarket shoppers.” before the word “Mean” has been deleted.Discussion section11. Line 30, page 8. In the review comments, the reviewer questioned that “Please explain why you make the statement that ‘this could be much worse in other parts of China’ - is there evidence of a difference, and if so why is that? Please expand on this.” We changed the statement into “This study was conducted in urban Beijing, the most developed area in China. It might be much worse in other parts.”12. Line 4, page 9. As suggested by the reviewer, we modified these sentences—“We recommend that the government should promote awareness of the relationship between sodium and hypertension and educate people about the relationship between salt and sodium, not only the relationship between salt and hypertension. Considering that people are much more familiar with “salt” than “sodium”, we strongly suggest adding salt values to labels instead of labeling sodium.” 13. Line 20, page 9. Considering the reviewer’s comments, we deleted two sentences that were not very important but easy to cause misunderstanding. In addition, we added some examples of the labelling techniques that could be used, so it reads as “Innovative methods or techniques for nutrition labelling, for example color-coding or use of bold text which are easy to understand and use, should be considered and developed.” 14. Line 31, page 9. As suggested by the reviewer, we reconsidered these sentences and changed the statement into “This may be partially due to that it is still far from translating the knowledge of the NIP to the choice of healthy food, or they believe they can make good choice