Author’s response to reviews

Title: The association between dietary isoflavones intake and gastric cancer risk: a meta-analysis of epidemiological studies

Authors:
Jie You (zzu_youjie@126.com)
Yafei Sun (sunyafei66@126.com)
Yacong Bo (boyacong@163.com)
Yiwei Zhu (yiwei0726@163.com)
Dandan Duan (15236273181@163.com)
Han Cui (zhuxicl@126.com)
Quanjun Lu (Lqjnutr@zzu.edu.cn)

Version: 1 Date: 20 Feb 2018

Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor,

Thank you for giving us the chance to resubmit our manuscript "The association between dietary isoflavones intake and gastric cancer risk: a meta-analysis of epidemiological studies" (PUBH-D-17-03047). We have revised the paper according to the reviewers’ comments and all changes in the manuscript are highlighted in green in the text.

The following is our point-by-point responses to reviewers’ comments. The green font contents marked are the reviewers’ comments. We have revised the paper according to the comments of Editorial Board and the Reviewers, and shown in red font text.

Reviewer #1:

1. Response to comment: In general, major revisions of the English language are needed regarding wording, grammar, sentence construction.
Response: Thank you for your valuable advices. Our manuscript has been edited and proofread by two professional English-speakers according to your suggestions. They read it carefully, sentence by sentence, correcting errors in punctuation, grammar, and English usage, as well as rewriting awkward, poorly worded sentences and phrases. The corresponding corrections in the text are highlighted in green.

2. Response to comment: Gastric adeno-carcinoma, gastric cardia adeno-carcinoma or other distinguishing terms should be used instead of gastric cancer.

Response: We agree with you but the articles we collected are not enough to be divided into subgroups such as gastric adeno-carcinoma, gastric cardia adeno-carcinoma or other distinguishing terms. We should subdivide to analyze if we do update meta-analysis in the future.

3. Response to comment: Discussion section: The information on methodology in this section should be moved to the relevant section. Repetitions should be excluded from the discussion text.

Response: Thank you very much. We have moved the information on methodology in this section to the relevant section. Repetitions have been removed from discussion section as your recommendation. (Discussion section, line 123-128, page 6-7)

4. Response to comment: Conclusion: The last sentence may be revised as "No significant association between isoflavones and gastric cancer risk was found in this meta-analysis, suggesting higher dietary isoflavones intake is not associated with a decline in the risk of gastric cancer."

Response: Thanks. According to your good suggestion, we have revised the last sentence in the conclusion section. (Conclusion section, line 175-177, page 9)

5. Response to comment: Regarding the advantages of the study, the following statement is not justified in view of the other meta-analyses on the subject, some of which are included among the references of the manuscript: "Firstly, the comprehensive meta-analysis is the first one to estimate the potential association between dietary isoflavones intake and the risk of gastric cancer." Recommendation: The manuscript should be re-evaluated after revisions.
Response: Thanks for your valuable and thoughtful advices. We have re-evaluated it after revisions according to your suggestions.

Special thanks to you for your good comments. Best wishes to you!

Reviewer #2:

1. Response to comment: Regarding your search strategy, you indicate that 8 articles were excluded because these were reviews. Did you explore the references of these review articles? I think it would be advisable to include this information as you could probably find additional articles following your inclusion criteria by doing so.

Response: Thank you very much for your valuable and thoughtful advices. We did explore the references of the 8 articles and found no additional articles. (Methods section, line 47-48, 58-59, page 3)

2. Response to comment: why you decided not to include 28 articles in which isoflavones were reported as supplements? It could be interesting to see the findings of these 28 articles incorporated in the article somewhere regardless of exclusion or inclusion criteria. It will also justify why you didn’t include these in your main review.

Response: Thanks. This is our negligence. We added isoflavones supplements in Exclusion Criterion section according to your suggestions. Dietary isoflavones intake is a long-term habit and supplemental isoflavones intake is a short-term behavior, which has much impact on dietary isoflavones intake, inevitably. We focused on dietary isoflavones intake in this meta-analysis. Therefore, we only take dietary intake into consideration. (Methods section, line 62, page 3)

Special thanks to you for your good comments. Best wishes to you!

Reviewer #3:

1. Response to comment: Please put more information on starting year of searching paper to include the study.
Response: Thanks for your valuable suggestions. We have added more information in detail on starting year of searching paper to include the study. (Abstract section, line 13, page 1; Methods section, line 45, page 3)

2. Response to comment: Did you assess the quality of the selected papers particularly in section of method before pooled into the analysis. If yes, please identify the method to assess the quality of the papers.

Response: Thanks for your valuable advices. We have assessed the quality of our selected papers by use of the Newcastle-Ottawa Scale according to your suggestions. (Data Extraction section, line 72-74, page 4)

3. Response to comment: Please clarify the original results of each selected paper regards to the association of isoflavones and gastric cancer.

Response: Thank you for your good suggestion. The original results of each selected paper in regards to the association of isoflavones and gastric cancer have been clarified which highlighted in green in the text. (Results section, line 97-101, page 5)

4. Response to comment: In session of "Discussion", the second paragraph should be move to the first paragraph.

Response: Thanks for your good advice. We have moved the second paragraph the first paragraph according to your suggestion. (Discussion section, line 123-128, page 6)

Special thanks to you for your good comments. Best wishes!

Thank you and all the reviewers for the kind advices.

Sincerely yours,

Quanjun Lu

The authors' response letter has been included as a supplementary file