Author’s response to reviews

Title: The association between exposure to secondhand smoke and psychological symptoms among Chinese children

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Responses to Editors’ and Reviewers’ comments

Comments to the Author:

Reviewer #1 comments:

General comments

This revised manuscript has improved as a result of the authors' response to revisions. Unfortunately, I do have a few continuing concerns about this manuscript.

1) The term mental disorder continues to be used throughout the manuscript despite the fact that the authors indicated that they addressed this by using the less awkward and more widely used phrase psychological symptoms. While psychological symptoms may not be an appropriate substitution in all places in this manuscript, the authors should consider more appropriate terms like mental health disorders or psychological disorders when discussing clinically significant disorders and mental health or psychological symptoms when referring to levels of symptoms.

Authors’ response: Thanks indeed. We have tried to avoid using the term ‘mental disorder’ throughout the manuscript as shown in the track change version.
2) It is not clear if the authors consistently used levels of symptoms as assessed by the SDQ or categorical data (normal, borderline, clinical) in their analyses. It appears that it is the former but this needs to be clarified starting with the methods section when describing the scoring of the SDQ.

Authors’ response: Thanks for your suggestions. First, we used the logistic regression to examine the association when SDQ total and subscales scores were classified into two groups as normal and abnormal (as shown in Table 3). Second, SDQ total and subscales scores could be categorized into three groups, i.e. “normal”, “borderline” and “abnormal” according to the cut-off points. We additionally did sensitivity analysis using ordinal logistic regression to check the consistency (as shown in Table 4). To make it clear, we have rewritten these sentences in the method part. [Method section, Line 124-129, Page 8].

3) A careful read-through of this manuscript is necessary to catch typos and other small grammatical issues.

Authors’ response: Thanks for your comments. We have revised our manuscript with the help of a native English academic.

Reviewer #2 comments:

GENERAL COMMENTS: I thought the authors did very well to answer my comments, including proof reading the manuscript. The paper is technically sound and I have only a few more grammatical errors to correct.

ADDITIONAL REQUESTS/SUGGESTIONS:

Abstract:
- Page 3, Lines 32-33: "We used the logistic regression model" should be "We used logistic regression"

Authors’ response: Corrected

Introduction:
- Page 5, Line 54: "varied widely" should be "varies widely"
- Page 6, Line 74: "have increased" should be "increases"
- Page 6, Line 78: "positive association" should be "positive associations"
- Page 6, Line 84: "banned smoke" should be "banned smoking"
- Page 6, Line 91: "from Chinese" should be "from the Chinese"

Authors’ response: Corrected

Methods
- Page 7, Line 102: "Grade" should be "grades"
- Page 8, Line 115: "conducted" should be "collected"
- Page 9, Line 134: "presences" should be "presence"
- Page 9, Line 145: "linear trend" should be "linear trends"
- Page 10, Line 170: "an ethical approval" should be "ethical approval"

Authors’ response: Corrected

Results
- Page 11, Line 190: "total SDQ" should be "total SDQ score"
- Page 12, Line 197: "remain" should be "remained"

Authors’ response: Corrected

Discussion
- Page 13, Line 216: delete "and with" and start a new sentence with "two"
- Page 13, Line 22: "exposure" should be "exposed"
- Page 13, Line 228: "was" should be "is"
- Page 13, Line 231: "level" should be "levels"
- Page 13, Line 231: "underestimate" should be "underestimation"
- Page 14, Line 236: "by questionnaire of SDQ" should be "by questionnaires"
- Page 14, Line 238: "good predictor" should be "a good predictor"
- Page 14, Line 246: "is cross-sectional" should be "are cross-sectional", and "couldn't" should be "could not"
- Page 14, Line 255: "pretty lower" should be "very low"
- Page 15, Line 262: "n utero" should be "in utero"
- Page 15, Line 262: "from workplace" should be "from the workplace"
- Page 15, Line 270: "exerts" should be "exert"
- Page 15, Line 271: "arear" should be "areas", and "mediate" should be "mediates"
- Page 15, Line 272: "activate and desensitize" should be "activating and desensitizing"
- Page 15, Line 273: "child's brain is" should be "children's brains are"
- Page 15, Line 274: "which is" should be "which are"
- Page 15, Line 275: "system" should be "systems"
- Page 15, Line 277: "receptor" should be "receptors", and "can affect" should be "can affect the"
- Page 16, Line 279: "in prefrontal" should be "in the prefrontal"
- Page 16, Line 286: "for child's" should be "for a child's"
- Page 17, Line 299: delete "the"
- Page 17, Line 301: "strict" should be "restrict"

Authors’ response: Corrected

Other
- Page 18, Line 308: "world health organization" should be "World Health Organization", and "strengths and difficulties questionnaire" should be "Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire"

Authors’ response: Corrected
Finally, please double check the references. "The Lancet" should be "Lancet", "BMJ open" should be "BMJ Open", etc. Check for consistency in abbreviation.

Authors’ response: Corrected