Author’s response to reviews

Title: Risk of transmission via medical employees and importance of routine infection prevention policy in a nosocomial outbreak of Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS): a descriptive analysis from a tertiary care hospital in South Korea

Authors:

Hyun Kyun Ki (kihkdr@kuh.ac.kr)

Sang Kuk Han (sk01.han@samsung.com)

Jun Seong Son (isonjs@naver.com)

Sang O Park (empso@kuh.ac.kr)

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear editor

We appreciate the detailed comments. Our replied to the comments of editor and amended manuscript are as follows:

Editor Comments:

1. Please note that informed written Consent for publication is always required for the publication of potentially identifiable information. Therefore, please clarify whether the informed consent obtained from the patient had been in written form. If you cannot secure written consent then please complete the following revision as requested:

We note that your manuscript contains potentially identifiable information; i.e. age, sex, etc., throughout the main text as well as in table 1. Please amend the manuscript to address this issue by removing the sex and ages of participants. Alternatively, you may opt to present the ages as a range at this time in order to fully protect and ensure the anonymity of the participants.
Examples of indirect identifiers are as follows:

- Place of treatment or health professional responsible for care
- Sex
- Rare disease or treatment
- Sensitive data, such as illicit drug use or "risky behaviour"
- Socioeconomic data, such as occupation or place of work, income, or education
- Household and family composition
- Ethnicity
- Age
- Small denominators--population size of <100
- Very small numerators--event counts of <3

Reply: Some patients were died and we could not contact the other patients alive. As your suggested, we revised some phrases regarding age (No. of age ☐ old; removed vertical line of age in table 1), sex (she ☐ patient; removed vertical line of sex in table 1), disease (multiple myeloma ☐ malignancy disease), place (all hospital names were revised), and other personal data in the manuscript, table 1 and figures (hospital names were revised).

2. Please state whether the maps depicted in figure 1 are your own or taken from another source. If taken from another source please acknowledge the source in the figure legend, and if it is under copyright also state the written permission given to use and adapt it.

If the above conditions are not met the image needs to be removed. Please note the editors may request proof of permission at any time.

Reply: All figures were redrawn by the authors. In Figure 1, the transmission map was redrawn using background Korean maps which do not require copyright permission. We inserted it into legend of figure 1.
3. Please include the date of trial registration with the Trial registration number in the abstract. If the date of registration is after the date that the first participant was recruited, please also state ‘retrospectively registered’.

Reply: We added the date of registration in the revised abstract.

4. Please provide a 'Declarations' heading for your manuscript after the Conclusions section.

Reply: We rewrote them in the revised manuscript.

Thank you in advance for your kind considerations.

Sincerely yours

Sang O Park