Author's response to reviews

Title: A cross sectional study between the prevalence of chronic pain and academic pressure in adolescents in China (Shanghai)

Authors:

Yongxing Zhang (phenixzyx@163.com)
Guoying Deng (763455741@qq.com)
Zhiqing Zhang (1539181596@qq.com)
Qian Zhou (554915383@qq.com)
Xiang Gao (908008003@qq.com)
Liqing Di (450536794@qq.com)
Qianzi Che (545252462@qq.com)
Xiaoyu Du (13089611981@qq.com)
Yun Cai (1559671263@qq.com)
Qinghua Zhao (sawboneszhao2014@163.com)
Xuedong Han (hxdong66@126.com)

Version: 5 Date: 25 March 2015

Author's response to reviews: see over
1. Please structure the manuscript under the headings: Background, Methods, Results, Discussion, Conclusions, List of abbreviations used (if any), Competing interests, Authors' contributions, Acknowledgements, Endnotes (if any), References. You can still use subheadings within each of the main sections.

Author’s response:
Gratefully accept the revision suggestion.

2. Please avoid numbering the paragraphs in the methods section

Author’s response:
Gratefully accept the revision suggestion.

3. Title: I suggest using the term 'cross sectional study' rather than 'correlation study'

Author’s response:
Gratefully accept the revision suggestion.

4. It is described that chronic pain was defined as "the pain lasting over 6 hours single a time or short time with high frequency over 2-3 one day, and this bad situation happened at least 3 times in 3 months". However, this information was not available from the questionnaire asking "in the last 3 months, how often did you feel pain in neck/shoulder, low back, head and abdomen". Please, just report what you asked, the response options and how these data were used. I still think the term 'chronic pain' is not really appropriate. Chronic pain is commonly defined as pain persisting for more than 3 months. I suggest you describe pain category as 'frequent pain' or 'frequent or continuous pain'.

Author’s response:
Thank you for suggestions. Before we conducted this survey, we really puzzled about how to define “chronic pain”. According to our common sense, chronic pain is the unpleasant feeling lasting at least 3 months. But during the pre-survey, some volunteers said to us: "we cannot understand what chronic pain is. If I have a kind of unpleasant feeling just once in 3 month, is that chronic pain? And what about twice? Three times? How many times in 3 month is the pain that we can call it ‘chronic pain’? Every day? Then the answers might be all negative. " So we try to let the students know which kind of pain can be called “chronic pain”. Before we distributed the questionnaires, we told the students, if you have this kind of pain or unpleasant feelings which lasting over 6 hours single a time or short time with high frequency over 2-3 one day, and this kind of feelings happen at least 3 times in 3 months, then we
can tell you “you have suffered from a chronic pain.” In this way, we are able to differentiate the chronic pain from acute pain. But in the questionnaire, we just simplified this long question as "in the last 3 months, how often did you feel pain in neck/shoulder, low back, head and abdomen". The explanations above can be found in the “Methods” section, maybe we didn’t express it clearly. Thanks for your advice again, and we will change some wording which will be shown in the “Methods” section.

5. In the background the term chronic pain is generally used for any pain. The first sentence provides a definition of ‘pain’ but not ‘chronic pain’. Please reserve 'chronic' to long-lasting (>3 months) pain conditions

Author’s response:
Gratefully accept the revision suggestion.

6. As mentioned in the previous review we recommend that you provide some background information on the prevalence of pain in children/adolescents from other countries in order for the reader to have something to compare your results to

Author’s response:
Gratefully accept the revision suggestion, and we have added the relative information to the “Background” section.

7. Throughout the paper I suggest you describe academic pressure as "self-reported academic pressure"

Author’s response:
Gratefully accept the revision suggestion.

8. The last paragraph in the method section "In this study, a total of 3000 .." belongs to the result section

Author’s response:
Gratefully accept the revision suggestion.

9. The tables are a relatively heavy. Please avoid more than one table at each page. Also, please use a landscape orientation of the pages showing table 4 and table 5

Author’s response:
Gratefully accept the revision suggestion.

10. I think you should report more clearly that there was not a systematic
association between many working hours and pain or between rank in school and pain.

**Author’s response:**
Thank you for your suggestions. Actually, there is correlation between many working hours and chronic pain, but only if it lasts long enough such as more than 10 hours that the correlation shows significant. So is the correlation between rank in school and pain, and that’s to say only if the gap of rank is large enough that the correlation shows significant. We will add this to the “Discussion” section.

11. The conclusion is difficult to follow. Please have a look at the wording to see if this can be made simpler.

**Author’s response:**
Gratefully accept the revision suggestion.

12. Please avoid conclusions that are not supported by your results. The conclusion states: "Chinese adolescents bear a heavy burden of learning. This heavy learning burden induces mental stress and changes in living habits" - the study did not address an association between study burden and mental stress and the conclusion should not indicate that

**Author’s response:**
Gratefully accept the revision suggestion.

13. The conclusion also states: ". as well as the relevance between the prevalence of chronic pain and academic pressure". I guess you intended to state that the study revealed an association between pain and academic pressure.

**Author’s response:**
Gratefully accept the revision suggestion.

14. Please, make clear from the conclusion that the possible causal pathways between pain and feeling pressure at school are unexplored"

**Author’s response:**
Gratefully accept the revision suggestion.