Author’s response to reviews

Title: Risk factors of early childhood caries (ECC) among children in Beijing - a prospective cohort study

Authors:
Can Fan (fancanc@sysu.edu.cn)
Wen Wang (wangwenhui600@gmail.com)
Tao Xu (taoxu@bjmu.edu.cn)
Shuguo Zheng (zhengsg86@gmail.com)

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Prof. Alexandria Latto:

On behalf of my co-authors, I would like to thank you very much for potentially accepting our manuscript, which was entitled “Risk factors of early childhood caries (ECC) among children in Beijing - a prospective cohort study” (OHEA-D-18-00495R1).

Thanks must go to the editors and reviewers for their positive and constructive comments on the manuscript. We have revised the manuscript according to reviewers’ and editorial comments. The main corrections in the manuscript and the responses to the comments are as follows. We sincerely wish that all these changes may fulfill the requirements to make the manuscript acceptable for publication in BMC Oral Health.

We are looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Shuguo Zheng

Department of Preventive Dentistry

Peking University School and Hospital of Stomatology,

National Engineering Laboratory for Digital and Material Technology of Stomatology
Responses to the comments:

According to the reviewers’ and editorial comments, we have made the following revisions on this manuscript:

1. Guglielmo Campus (Reviewer 1):
   A- the main issue is related to the ethical consideration. The patients affected at baseline were treated? Or patients that at baseline had a higher mutans streptococci concentration had some kind of preventive measure?

   We are sorry for the negligence of relevant statement. Guardians of all children at baseline were given the results of oral examination and treatment advice. Oral health education and topical fluoride were also implemented as routine. The outreach group of our department provide dental treatment in our cooperative kindergartens, including kindergartens involved in this study. All participants with caries can receive dental treatment with their guardians’ consent.

   We have added a sentence “The dental treatment for all participants with caries after baseline examination were not interfered” to the participant part as supplementary. (M&M section, participants, last line, page 6)

   B- please explain the sample size procedure “convenience sampling method is not clear”

   In order to perform the study smoothly, we selected several kindergartens near our hospital, and our department has cooperated with these kindergartens for many years. In addition, all children aged 3-4 years in these kindergartens were invited to take part in our study.

   For more clearly statement, “six cooperative kindergartens near our hospital were selected for study” were added in the method section. (M&M section - participants- line 6, page5-6)
C- what about the examiner calibration for the follow-up examination?

We highly appreciate the reviewer’s carefulness. Our department has more than ten cooperative kindergartens. Oral examinations are offered to all children in these kindergartens at least once per year. The two examiners of this study often perform these examinations and calibration, and therefore we did not calibrate for the follow-up examination.

2. Tamanna Tiwari, BDS, MDS, MPH (Reviewer 2):

the authors have used "parent" in some places and "guardians" at other places in the paper. Pls be consistent in using the terminologies.

Thanks for the reviewer’s careful inspection. we changed from “parents” to “guardians” in the manuscript:

M&M section -Ethics statement-line 1, page 5
Discussion section -paragraph 5- line 7, page 13

3. Please include a “Declarations” heading.

The heading “Declarations” was added in the manuscript in the following format.

Declarations
- Ethics approval and consent to participate
- Consent to publish
- Availability of data and materials
- Competing interests
4. In the section 'Funding', please also describe the role of the funding body/bodies in the design of the study and collection, analysis, and interpretation of data and in writing the manuscript.

We added the following sentence to the funding section:

These funding were used to purchase the examination instruments and Dentocult SM Strip kits, print questionnaires, and manuscript editing services.

5. At this stage, please upload your manuscript as a single, final, clean version that does not contain any tracked changes, comments, highlights, strikethroughs or text in different colours. All relevant tables/figures/additional files should also be clean versions. Figures (and additional files) should remain uploaded as separate files.

We have checked and ensure that this manuscript and tables/figures are final, clean versions.