Author’s response to reviews

Title: Age estimation in three distinct East Asian population groups using southern Han Chinese dental reference dataset

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the decision that our paper is potentially acceptable for publication in BMC Oral Health. We have addressed your comments and have made point-to-point response to each comment. The maps depicted in figure 1 are our own. A single, final, clean version of the manuscript that does not contain any tracked changes, comments, highlights, strikethroughs or text in different colours has been uploaded.

Editor’s comments:

1. We note the addition of a new author, Teekayu P Jorns, since original submission of the manuscript. In line with COPE guidelines, BioMed Central requires written confirmation from all authors that they agree with any proposed changes in authorship of submitted manuscripts or published articles.
In such cases, we use a standardized form, found at this web address https://resource-cms.springernature.com/springer-cms/rest/v1/content/7454878/data/v5, which we would request that you and your co-authors complete.

Response: We were surprised when we saw this comment because Teekayu P Jorns is a very important co-author. He provided the Thai data in our study. He is definitely not a new author. We carefully checked our original submission and found that his name was on both the author list and the author’s last name list of the manuscript. In the Author’s Contribution section, it was also stated that “TPJ: Selection of radiographs, Critical revision of the manuscript”. However, his name was accidentally taken out from the online submission system. We are very sorry for this mistake. Anyway, we still filled the “change of authorship request form”.

2. Please include a statement on consent to participate in the “Ethics approval and consent to participate” section of the Declarations.

If a consent to participate statement is already present within the main text/Methods section that gives the above information, please also copy/place it under this sub-section.

Response: A statement on consent to participate has been placed on both sections.

3. Please state in the cover letter 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. Should you require an alternative source you may wish to try Wikimedia Commons: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

Response: The map depicted in figure 1 is our own.

4. Please provide a “List of abbreviations” subsection after the Conclusions section. If abbreviations are used in the text, they should be defined in the text at first use and included in this list.

Response: We have provided a “List of abbreviations” subsection after the Conclusions section.

5. Please remove all information related to funding from the Acknowledgments subsection. Funding information should be presented solely in the Funding subsection. The Acknowledgments subsection should solely feature information which acknowledges anyone who contributed towards the article who does not meet the criteria for authorship including anyone who provided professional writing services or materials.
Response: We have removed all information related to funding from the Acknowledgments subsection.

6. All sources of funding for the research reported should be declared in this section. Please also state the role of the funding body in the design of the study and collection, analysis, and interpretation of data and in writing the manuscript.

Response: We have stated that the funding body has not involved in the design of the study or collection, analysis, or interpretation of data or in writing the manuscript.

7. We recommend that you ask a native English speaking colleague to help you copy-edit the paper so as to remove typographical errors and improve readability. If this is not possible, you may need to use a professional language editing service. Use of an editing service is neither a requirement nor a guarantee of acceptance for publication.

Response: Our co-authors, GJR and NMK, are native English speakers. They have edited the paper so as to remove typographical errors and improve readability.

8. Please remove the response to reviewers from the file inventory, as it is no longer needed at this stage of the editorial process.

Response: We have removed the response to reviewers from the file inventory.

9. 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.

Response: We have uploaded our 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 are clean versions. Figures (and additional files) remain uploaded as separate files.

Additional comments on Oct 25, 2019

1. We note that your research took place in three countries, the Philippines, Thailand and Japan. Please can you confirm whether you obtained ethical approval from local ethics committees in each of these three countries. If you did, please include the full name of the ethics committee (and the institute to which it belongs to) that approved the study and the committee’s reference number if appropriate.
If you did not need formal ethics approval, please confirm that this complies with national guidelines and provide a reference which supports this. Alternatively, supply a statement that says that a local ethics committee ruled that no formal ethics approval was required in this particular case.

Response: This study did not take place in three countries. The southern Han Chinese dental reference dataset was established in Hong Kong, and this study was conducted in Hong Kong. As indicated in the manuscript, ethics approval to conduct this study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Hong Kong (UW-12-280). To test the applicability of the southern Han Chinese reference dataset, the archived radiographs were obtained from respective university teaching hospitals in Philippines, Thailand, and Japan. As a routine practice, all patients or parents/primary caregivers of patients younger than 18 years old, signed a consent form that they allowed their or the children’s information to be used for teaching and research purposes before the patients could be treated in the university teaching hospitals. The radiographs were taken originally for the patients’ diagnosis or treatment, not for the use in our study. Therefore, the radiographs were “reused”. The patient identifiers were masked and only the following information was included in the data sheet: Date of Birth, Date of radiograph, Sex, and Ethnicity code. The radiographs along with the data sheet were sent to the primary research center (University of Hong Kong) in encrypted compact discs where the investigation was conducted. So, formal ethics approval was not required according to the local ethics committee of the respective countries. We have added a statement in both the text and the “Ethics approval and consent to participate” section that “a local ethics committee ruled that no formal ethics approval was required in this particular case”.

2. Please make sure the abstract contains only the following headings: Background, Methods, Results, Conclusions.

Response: The abstract now contains only the following headings: Background, Methods, Results, Conclusions.

3. At this stage, please upload your manuscript as a single, 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.

Response: We did it accordingly.