Author’s response to reviews

Title: The influence of probiotics on genital high-risk human papilloma virus clearance, associated lesions and quality of cervical smear: A randomized placebo-controlled trial

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor Prof. Tovah Honor Aronin,

We thank to the reviewers for further valuable comments. All the issues raised by the reviewers were answered as follows:

Reply to reviewer 1:

1. Bacterial vaginosis (BV) was not reported.
   Ans: This had been acknowledged as a limitation in discussion section (page 15, 2nd paragraph, line 39).

2. BV diagnosis is often clinical, not microbiological, so that the association with HPV status is not so straightforward.
Ans: Although the diagnosis of BV is clinically, in research studies the use of Nugent or Hay/Ison criteria to evaluate Gram-stained smear of vaginal discharge is the diagnostic standard. Therefore, the association between HPV and BV from previous studies may be convincing.

3. The significant decrease in mildly abnormal cytology may be likely due to a reduction in BV condition.

Ans: In present study we have no data to prove that, although it may be likely.

4. Weakness in the study was also confirmed relating to the small sample size that conferred a low statistical power.

Ans: This had been acknowledged as a limitation in discussion section (page 15, 2nd paragraph, line 45).

5. The revised/added sentences are not written in good English

Ans: We have made an amendment (page 15, 2nd paragraph, line 39).

Reply to reviewer 2:

1. Please remove the first sentence of the results (page 8 lines 39 to page 9 lines 4) and move these rather to the Methods (page 6 line 33).

Ans: We have made an amendment. (page 8 and page 6)

Again, on behalf of all authors, we thank the reviewers for their valuable comments, which led to significant improvements to the manuscript.

Respectfully,

Hao Lin,