Author's response to reviews

Title: Real World Research: a Complementary Method to Establish the Effectiveness of Acupuncture

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Version: 3  Date: 29 April 2015

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor and Reviewers,

We would like to thank you and all the reviewers for their insightful comments on our manuscript under consideration for publication in “BMC Complementary and Alternative Medicine”. We have revised the manuscript taking into account all the comments and suggestions of the reviewers. We believe that your comments have greatly enhanced the quality of our manuscript. We have provided revised manuscript with our changes tracked. The responses to comments from reviewers are as follows:

Responses to comment 1 (Reviewer: Sue Cochrane)

Reviewer's report:
1. The authors, Luo, Xu & Liu, have offered a useful discussion of issues arising from contemporary acupuncture research and they offer a proposal of real world research as an alternative method of evaluating acupuncture in clinical settings.

Beyond the fact that there are expression issues evident in the manuscript (which only needs minor editorial attention) my only concern about this paper is that it does not cite or address other discussions of acupuncture research. They present their argument as if they uniquely conceive that there are problems in applying only RCT models of research. There has in fact been extensive discussion about the problems of applying RCTs in acupuncture research – eg. (MacPherson, Nahin et al. 2008, Paterson, Baarts et al. 2009, Witt 2009, Witt 2011, Colagiuri and Smith 2012, Thompson, Jenkins et al. 2012) and novel ways to reanalyse data from clinical trials eg.(Vickers, Cronin et al. 2012)

This would be a much stronger paper which would make a greater contribution to the debates around acupuncture research if the authors were able to incorporate such discussion.

I commend the authors on their proposal of RWR and look forward to their contribution to improving the relevance of acupuncture research to acupuncture practice.

Response:
1. We have made some language corrections. Please see the revised manuscript.
2. We accept your suggestion and incorporate other discussion of acupuncture research. Please see the revised manuscript. (Please see page 8, paragraph 3, line 1-4; page 10, paragraph 3, line 1; page 11, paragraph 3, line 1; page 13-14)
We indeed want to conduct a RWR to assess the effectiveness of acupuncture, and also want to see more objective and persuasive evidence of acupuncture treatment.

2. Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Response: We have made some language corrections. Please see the revised manuscript.

Responses to comment 2 (Reviewer: Christopher Zaslawski)

Reviewer's report:
1. Major Compulsory Revision- This manuscript presents a perspective on how acupuncture research designs should be considered in the "real world". It is not experimental or clinical research but more a position statement. It presents a different view of what constitutes "externally valid research" that is gaining popularity in the field of acupuncture research. It will need further editing for English expression. To this end I have attached suggested edits for English expression and clarity.

Response: We have accepted your suggested edits for English expression and improved the written English. Thank you so much! Please see the revised manuscript.

2. Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Response: We have made some language corrections. Please see the revised manuscript.

The author Jing Luo changed her affiliation because her work unit has been changed from Beijing University of Chinese Medicine to China-Japan Friendship Hospital.

Again, we sincerely appreciate your comments on our manuscript. For any further question, please feel free to let us know.

Sincerely yours,

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