Author’s response to reviews

Title: Decreased fracture incidence with traditional Chinese medicine therapy in patients with osteoporosis: A nationwide population-based cohort study

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Professor Hi-Joon Park

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Title: “Decreased fracture incidence with traditional Chinese medicine therapy in patients with osteoporosis: A nationwide population-based cohort study.” by Wang et al.

We appreciated the Editor and Reviewers’ efforts and patience when reviewing our article. Your comments and those of the Reviewers were highly insightful and enabled us to improve the quality of our document. Our responses to each comment from the Reviewers are provided in the following pages on a point-by-point basis.

We hope our revised manuscript will be accepted for publication in the journal BMC Complementary and Alternative Medicine.
Best regards

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Ye-Seul Lee (Reviewer 2): The authors' response to the comment regarding immortal time bias was accurate and informative.

However, the author's corrections regarding bias does not show that the study is free of bias; rather, the answers increased the uncertainty of the studies in a sense that the lower incidence of osteoporotic fracture might not be due to TCM use, but due to lower severity of the disease and/or higher economic level of TCM group patients. The fact that there were only 18 patients when matched for the possible variables may imply that the differences of economic levels and patient severity may also be the cause of the different utilization level of TCM service.

Any researcher with experience on Kaplan-Meier curve will notice this major problem in this study. Therefore, it seems crucial that the authors include more limitations and explain the implications of this study, in order to prevent any overestimation of the results and the meanings.

#Response:

1) Thank you so much. The changes of our manuscript are below. We tried our best to make a more realistic explanation.

2) (Discussion section, line 2, page 12). “The Kaplan–Meier curve also clearly demonstrated that patients who took TCM had a lower incidence of fracture.” has been changed to “The Kaplan–Meier curve also demonstrated that patients who took TCM had a lower incidence of fracture.” We delete the word of “clearly”.

3) (Discussion section, line 8, page 14). The bias of Kaplan–Meier curve had been added. “Thirdly, the Kaplan–Meier curve might be influenced by economic levels and patient
severity. However, we can conclude that TCM might have a positive impact on the prevention of osteoporotic fracture from Table 2 and Table 3.”