Author’s response to reviews

Title: Analyzing hidden populations online: topic, emotion, and social network of HIV-related users in the largest Chinese online community

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the helpful comments for the manuscript’s last revision, we have made necessary edits according to your suggestions.

Editor Comments:

1 Ethics approval and consent to participate
It is stated that 'Since this dataset collected from webpages is open source and is not subject to the Dutch Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act (WMO), approval of the Medical Ethical Committee was not required....'

Could you please clarify why a study conducted in China should be subject/not subject to the Dutch Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act (WMO)?

Response: We have provided the details on the approval of ethic committee. See Declarations/Ethics approval and consent to participate.

2 Figure 1

The figure 1 is the screenshot of how the Baidu Tieba HIV Bar looks like. However, it contains some information (the logo of the Tieba, the face of the female celebrity, etc.), which might be under copyright. It is suggested to remove Figure 1. Instead, you can provide a link to the HIV bar in the main text

Response: We have removed the screenshot, referenced the url link, and re-ordered the rest figures in the manuscript. See Figures 1-7 in the revision.

3 Supplementary materials
Please ask help from a native English speaker for the Supplementary materials. Currently, the English translation doesn't really reflect the meaning of the original Chinese.

Response: We have made a thorough examination on the translation of Chinese corpus, and fixed a few typos in the rest of Supplementary materials.

We hope that the above changes have addressed all points and that the revision has met the requirement for publication in the journal. We greatly appreciate your patience and help on improving the paper.

Look forward to hearing from you again.

Best regards,

Xin Lu and Chuchu Liu