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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Editor Comments:

1 Ethics approval and consent to participate It is stated that 'The study was approved by the Medical Ethical Committee of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Peking University (IRB00001052-16016).' (1) However, none of the authors is from Peking University, so could you please clarify why the study was ethically approved by the IRB at Peking University?

Response: This is a collaborative study which is based on the Major Research plan of the National Natural Science Foundation of China “Big Data-Driven Approaches for Management and Decision Research” (国家自然科学基金委重大研究计划“大数据驱动的管理与决策研究”), the title of the funding is “Big Data-Based HIV Management and Decision Making for MSM Population (基于大数据的MSM艾滋病管理和决策范式研究)”. This study is guided by Professor Jiazhong Wei, and is partially funded by her project (no. 91546203), both are acknowledged in the article. (Chuchu Liu was guided by Prof. Zhongwei Jia and worked in her group on this topic earlier this year).

(2) Please send a copy of the ethics approval document to us by replying to this email and cc lingling.tian@biomedcentral.com with letter subject 'Ethics approval document + your manuscript ID'
Response: The copy of the ethics approval document is pasted below and is also sent to the email provided.

2 Please further improve the readability of the English translation of the supplementary materials. It is strongly suggested to ask help from a native English speaker.

Response: We have asked a friend, who is a native English speaker from UK for the help of English translation. As the corpus are from online text and the sentences are typically incomplete, sometimes are broken or with jargon, we tried to improve the clarification, as well as to keep the origin meaning from the Chinese expression. In addition, the corresponding author of the manuscript has spent 5 years in Europe, we are quite confident that the translation minimizes the expression bias between the two languages.

3 Upon resubmission, Please remove any tracked changes or highlighting and include only a single clean copy of the manuscript. Please ensure the document is in the final form for publication; please upload only files that are to be published. If you wish to respond to these revision requests, please insert the information in to the designated input box only

Response: Done.