Author’s response to reviews

Title: Satisfaction with service coverage and drug list may influence patients’ acceptance of general practitioner contract service: a cross-sectional study in Guangdong, China

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Response letter

Reviewer reports:
Yingyao Chen, PhD (Reviewer 1): The authors provided a comprehensive analysis of patients' acceptance of GP contract policy from eight dimensions. However, this paper would be improved if the authors could address the following issues:

1. The authors measured medical service utilization of PHCs using the number of visits at PHCs in the previous year. Since the recall period was as long as a year, recall bias could be a potential problem in this study. How did they address the issue of recall bias?

Response: Thanks for your advice, Prof Chen. We have to admit that recall bias is generally non-resolvable and could be a potential limitation in our analysis, and we are unthoughtful to not include this limitation in this article. To address this problem, we added some comments in the discussion. Recall bias is a major type of bias, and it could be a potential limitation that reduces the reliability in our analysis. The data we collected were recalled by the respondents within 12 months. Given the frequency of PHC use, we have to stay at this length of period because otherwise there could be higher probability of less differences among all the respondents. And there is no good way to solve this problem. Nevertheless, we tried to control the bias to our great ability. During the survey, we trained our investigator to improve their investigation skills, encouraging them to help respondents recalling by treasuring their patience. Completed questionnaires were checked independently immediately after investigation, and the auditors would re-survey the respondents if they think there were places needed to be fulfilled. Furthermore, there are also studies indicated that some bias might not be as significant as we thought, because the missing information neglected by the respondents might not be so important as to recognize.
2. The term "resident's acceptance of general practitioner contract services" was mentioned in the title, however the authors only interviewed patients at PHCs. To what extent could patients visiting PHCs represent the general residents in the selected cities? How did the authors address the problem of sampling bias in this study?

Response: Thank you for pointing this out. We firstly determined the respondents to be a resident based on the consideration that the target population of PHC might not have chronic diseases but could potentially receive care from the provider. However, when giving a second thought of the sampling source, we decided to change the title as to precisely reflect the identity of the respondents. Amendment: We replaced the term "residents" with "patients" in the title and the full text to be consistent with the sample source. (marked in the title and whole context)

3. The authors mentioned that "I can't get the medicine I need" was a major answer of patients who were asked "What disappointed you most about PHCs" (Line321-323), but it was not clear which part of patients answered this question. Were all patients or only patients who were dissatisfied with drug list asked this question? What specific aspects of drug list were the major concerns of patients who were dissatisfied with drug list?

Response: Thanks for raising this concern, Prof Chen. We asked this question among those patients who chose not to sign the contract. When asked why they did not sign the contract, the patients answered that they were not satisfied with PHCs (please refer to 259-261 in the updated version) and when asked what they were most dissatisfied with, the patients answered that they were dissatisfied with the drug list (please refer to 293-296 in the updated version).

Amendment: It explains which part of the patients are (please refer to line 293-294 in the updated version), and the patient's opinion was described more intactly (please refer to line 294-296 in the updated version).

4. There were some minor grammar errors in this manuscript. I would like to suggest the authors to proofread the manuscript during the revision.

Response: Thanks for your advice, Prof Chen. All the co-author and the first author had proofread the manuscript again. The modified sections are marked in the text.

Mohammadreza Mobinizadeh (Reviewer 2):
1) Which method was applied for designing the survey questioner? please elaborate more

Response: Thank you for your advice, Prof Mobinizadeh. The questionnaire was designed by the researchers based on a combined sources of literature analysis and expert opinion. (please refer to line 142-143 in the updated version). After designing the questionnaire, we had the reliability and validity test (please refer to line 150-154 in the updated version). The final version applied in this survey was a
modified questionnaire after preliminary survey (please refer to line 156-158 in the updated version).

2) Which method was applied for the measuring of the validity and reliability of survey questioner? please elaborate more
Response: Thanks for your advice, Prof Mobinizadeh. The reliability of the evaluation scale was assessed with Cronbach’s α and the validity was evaluated using factor analysis and was assessed by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO). The reliability and validity were high (Cronbach’s α= 0.87 and KMO= 0.86) (please refer to line 150-154 in the updated version)

3) Which method was applied for calculation of sampling size? please elaborate more
Response: Thanks for your advice, Prof Mobinizadeh. The sample size was calculated based on the outcome estimator from a previous study about patients’ assessment of CHCs. The minimum sample size of this study was estimated as 900 with a 99% confidence interval and a power of 80%. (please refer to line 136-139 in the updated version)

4) The details of results should be elaborate more in a categorizing format with sub heading.
Response: Thanks for your advice, Prof Mobinizadeh. There are three sub headings added in the results (please refer to line 188,198,203 in the updated version).

Editor comments: Thanks for your recommendation. I have read and add the recommend reference in the reference list. I also follow the guidance and check details the journal requires.