Author's response to reviews

Title: What is the working situation and satisfaction of medical staff in pilot county hospitals and their understanding and perspective of the reform: A study of public hospital reform in Hubei province of China

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor and Reviewers,
We would like to thank the editor for giving us a chance to resubmit the paper, and thank the reviewers for their careful reading and giving us comments and constructive suggestions concerning our manuscript entitled “What is the working status of medical staff in pilot county-level public hospitals and their cognition to the reform: A study of public hospital reform in Hubei province of China” (MS: 1867767246976415). Those comments and suggestions are all valuable and very helpful for revising and improving our paper, as well as the important guiding significance to our researches. Here we submit a new version of our manuscript with the title “What is the working situation and satisfaction of medical staff in pilot county hospitals and their understanding and perspective of the reform: A study of public hospital reform in Hubei province of China”, which has been modified according to the reviewers’ suggestions. We tried our best to improve the manuscript and made lots of changes, in-deep editing and revisions including the content, the framework and the language. Because of in-deep editing and revisions in almost every part, there are so many details of changes that we are not able to mark all of them in the revised manuscript. We tried our best to mark the main changes made in blue in the revised manuscript. We feel terribly sorry if this will bring any inconvenience to your work. We appreciate for Editors and Reviewers’ warm work earnestly, and hope that the correction will meet with approval.

Once again, thank you very much for your comments and suggestions.

Sincerely yours
Zhenni Luo, Pengqian Fang

The flowing is a point-to-point response to the three reviewers’ comments:

Reviewer #1(Reviewer: Gerard Schmets)
1. Comment:
Some words used in the title are not common or unclear. For example, “cognition”. Does it mean understanding? Knowledge?

Response:
It is really true as Reviewer raised the question that some words used in the title are unclear. We have made correction according to this comment, removed the word “cognition” and modified the title from “What is the working status of medical staff in pilot county-level public hospitals and their cognition to the reform: A study of public hospital reform in Hubei province of China” to “What is the working situation and satisfaction of medical staff in pilot county-level hospitals and their understanding and perspective of the reform: A study of public hospital reform in Hubei province of China”.

2. Comment:
Several sentences are unclear. For example in the abstract: "Medical staff did not appear to have a high level of understanding of public hospital reform and to have a negative attitude to achievement of the reform." Does it mean they have a positive or negative attitude? Confusing. The English should be revised.

Response:
It is really true as Reviewer raised the question that several sentences are unclear in manuscript. We have revised and improved the English writing in the new version of our manuscript.

3. Comment:
The Methodology needs to be better explained. In the results, some components need to be explained (for example, what are the different "professional titles")?

Response:
It is good suggestions that the Methodology needs to be better explained and some components need to be explained. As the Reviewer suggested, we have added many new contents including Study Population, Questionnaire and Statistical Analysis in order to explain the Methodology better and more detailed. The different “professional titles” show different professional skill level of medical staff. In China, a medical staff needs to take examines and be evaluated to achieve his (or her) “professional titles” corresponding to their professional skill level. In the revised manuscript, we have modified the “professional title” to “technical post title” for a better understanding. We also explained the different “technical post titles” in the first paragraph of the Results section.

4. Comment:
In the conclusions, the authors are very negative with the reform. This is misleading. We understand that the staff is negative regarding several aspects of the reform, but no evidence demonstrates the reform itself, in all its components, is unsatisfactory. The conclusions are very long and repetitive. And all negative. It should be shorten. The last chapter on understanding is the most interesting. It insists on the role of information, and need to better inform and consider staff conditions, the conclusions should be more positive and suggest options/solutions.

Response:
It is very reasonable as Reviewer commented, and we are very sorry for our subjective and one-sided analysis and viewpoints in the older version of manuscript. Considering the Reviewer’s suggestion, in the Discussions section and Conclusions section of the revised manuscript, we have affirmed the value and effects of public hospital reform in county-level hospitals, pointed out some aspects need to be improved, and made some suggestions. We wrote the Discussions section and Conclusions section according to the Results section, trying to give comments as objectively as possible. The new Conclusions section is shorter and concise, more positive and objective, and suggests solutions.

Special thanks to you for your good comments.

Reviewer #2 (Reviewer: Edson Araujo)
1. Comment:
Please review abstract - for example, it would be good to see objectives and question paper aims to address in the abstract.
Response:
It is really true as Reviewer commented that the old abstract needs improving. Considering the Reviewer’s suggestion, we have reviewed the abstract. The whole manuscript has made extensively edited, as well as the Abstract section. The objectives and question paper aims are addressed in the abstract of the revised manuscript.

2. Comment:
Some of the points discussed in the discussion/conclusions should be in the background, especially the ones that explain the reform.
Response:
It is very reasonable as Reviewer commented that some of the points discussed in the Discussion/Conclusions should be in the Background. We have modified the Background section, explained the reform programme and its importance and meaning in Background section. In the beginning of Discussion section, we remained some contents that briefly introduce the reform, in order to form a connecting link between the preceding and the following.

3. Comment:
Using graphs and tables would make the presentation of the results more reader friendly instead of describing too many percentages.
Response:
It is very good as Reviewer suggested that using graphs and tables would make the presentation of the results more friendly instead of describing too many percentages. We have used 5 tables to make the presentation of the analysis results in the Results section for a better understanding.

4. Please review the use of references within the text, some are incorrectly quoted.
Response:
Considering the Reviewer’s comments, we have reviewed the use of references and made some revise.

Special thanks to you for your good comments.

Reviewer #3 (Reviewer: wim Van van lerberghe)
1. Comment:
Include the results of the same survey among staff of hospitals not included in the pilot reform programme, so that there is some way of interpreting the results. In the absence of benchmarks or comparison with no-intervention hospitals, it is not possible to relate self-reported social status, expectations of pay, job satisfaction etc to the reform or indeed to attach meaning to the results. It would be particularly useful to see whether the perception and knowledge of the reform in the study sample is any different from that of health workers elsewhere.
Response:
What the Reviewer commented is very reasonable and great helpful. According to Reviewer’s
suggestion, we have made a new design, added data of medical staff in non-pilot county-level hospitals, in order to include the results of the same survey among medical staff not included in the pilot reform programme. We have made some analysis and comparison to see whether the working situation, satisfaction, the understanding and perspective of the reform of medical staff in pilot county hospitals are any different from those of medical staff in non-pilot county hospitals. The Results section has changed a lot in the revised manuscript.

2. Comment:
Be careful to distinguish between conclusions drawn from the data presented, and speculations about their interpretation. For example, the data do not provide any evidence to link stress and workload.

Response:
What the Reviewer commented is very reasonable. We are very sorry for that there was some confusion about the difference between conclusions drawn from the data presented, and speculations about their interpretation in the older manuscript. In the revised manuscript, we tried to base our discussions and conclusions on data analysis and literature analysis, giving comments as objectively as possible.

3. Comment:
It may be useful, in order to get more out of the data available, to analyse “cognition of the reform” in function of the respondent characteristics (male/female, type of job etc). From that point of view the data are under-analysed.

Response:
What the Reviewer commented is very reasonable and great helpful. According to Reviewer’s suggestion, we analysed the correlation between all indexes of socio-demographic factors and the understanding and perspective of public hospital reform of medical staff in pilot county hospitals in the Result section.

4. Comment:
Authors should be careful in their write up to distinguish between what goes in the different sections: intro (purpose, relevance), methods (including rationale for the choice of sample, response rates etc), results, and discussion with interpretation. In the latter it is important to distinguish between a discussion of what the data say and general observations on working conditions or the hospital reform programme.
Response:
What the Reviewer commented is very reasonable. According to the Reviewers’ comments and suggestions, we almost have re-written the whole paper, trying best to be careful in our write up to distinguish between what goes in the different sections. In the revised manuscript, the Background section explains the contents and significance of the reform programme, introduces the purpose of our study. The Methods section includes rationale and steps for the choice of sample, response rate, questionnaire, and statistical analysis methods. The Results section includes five parts of data analysis. The Discussions section and Conclusions section give interpretation of analyse results and some suggestions, basing on results of data analysis from the Results section and some literature analysis.

Special thanks to you for your good comments.