Dear Prof. Gong

Thank you very much for your decision letter and advice on our manuscript (Manuscript 37881) entitled “Fecal Microbial Dysbiosis in Chinese Patients with Inflammatory Bowel Disease”. We also thank the reviewer for the constructive and valuable comments and suggestions. Accordingly, we have revised the manuscript. All amendments are highlighted in red in the revised manuscript. In addition, point-by-point responses to the comments are listed below this letter.

We hope that the revision is acceptable for the publication in your journal.

Look forward to hearing from you soon.
With best wishes,
Yours sincerely,

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First of all, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the reviewer for the constructive and positive comments.

Replies to the Reviewer

Specific Comments

1. The DNA extraction method is important to analyze. The author should show the precise protocol of CTAB/SDS method used in the present study.

Response: Thank you for your insightful suggestion. The DNA extraction method has been added in the MATERIALS AND METHODS of the revised manuscript (Page 6, Lines 165-174) to address this issue.

2. The authors should indicate the limitation of this method using a feces sample. In addition, the sample number is very small in the present study.

Response: Thanks for your thoughtful suggestion. Limitations have been mentioned in the DISCUSSION of the revised manuscript (Page 17, Lines 481-486).Actually, our original thought was to recognize a specific microbe or group of microbes which abundances were significantly different between IBD patients and normal controls, so the sample number was very small. According to the results, it seemed failed. But it was likely that the phylum *Bacteroidetes* might have a negative impact on development of inflammation. Next, we will expand the sample size to confirm our data and hope to finish our intention if possible.

3. Compared to the feces sample, recent investigation showed the more significant role of mucosa-associated microbiota in IBD (Nishino K et al. J Gastroenterology 2017, Aug 29, Pub ahead).

Response: Thanks for raising this critical issue. Accordingly, several sentences have been added in the DISCUSSION (Page 17, Lines 487-496) of the revised manuscript to address this issue. Fecal microbiota and mucosa-associated microbiota should be investigated separately to better understand the role of the intestinal microbiota in health and disease. Currently, we are planning a study that aims to demonstrate the relationship of these two microbial niches.

Additional Minor Comments:

Title page

A1: Please revise and perfect your manuscript according to peer-reviewers' comments. (Page 1, Line 5).

Response: Thank you very much for your advice on our manuscript and we also thank the reviewer for the constructive and valuable comments and suggestions. Accordingly, we have revised the manuscript.

A2: You need to provide the grant application form(s) or certificate of funding agency for every grant, or we will delete the part of "Supported by...". (Page 1, Line 24-25).

Response: The grant application form of funding agency was provided in the system.

ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS

A3: Please finish this part following the below reminders. (Page 18, Line 503).

Response: The ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS has been added in the revised manuscript (Page 18, Line 504-563).

REFERENCES

A8: Please check and confirm that there are no repeated references! (Page 21, Line 565).

Response: The references have been checked in the revised manuscript and there are no repeated references. (Page 21, Line 566-820).

Figures and tables

A9: Please change it to "c" here and in the figure (Page 33, Line 847).

Response: Correction has been made in the revised manuscript (Page 33, Line 847).

A10: Please change it to "e" here and in the figure

Response: Correction has been made in the revised manuscript (Page 34, Line 862)