

Dear Professor:

Manuscript NO: 61384

Title: Differences in dietary habits of people with vs without irritable bowel syndrome and its association with symptom and psychological status: a pilot study

Thanks a lot for all the work done by staff in revising and publishing our manuscript.

All the authors have seriously considered the opinions of the reviewers, and thought that comments were very meticulous and professional, which further improved the quality of the paper.

We have revised the manuscript according to the reviewer's comments. The main revised parts are highlighted in **yellow**. We have responded to each of the comments listed below, with a clear indication of the location of the revision. Hopefully these will make the manuscript easier to publish.

All the best.

Yours Sincerely,

Shu-Kun Yao, Department of Gastroenterology, China-Japan Friendship Hospital, 2nd Yinghua East Road, Chaoyang District, Beijing 100029, China.

Email: shukunyao@126.com

Telephone: +86-13501008676

Answering reviewer 02155135

Thank you very much for giving us such valuable suggestions. We have made revisions or explanation point by point.

1. In my opinion this is a pilot study due to the very low sample size of the study of the IBS population. I suggest adding this to the title.

Answer: We agreed with the reviewer's opinion, and revised the title as required (page 1, Line 7-8). Related content has been highlighted in yellow in the revised version of manuscript.

2. In the introduction you reported that "the majority of studies using the food frequency questionnaire (FFQ) might not fully reflect the diet habits of IBS patients." Please could you add the specific bibliography.

Answer: For the food frequency questionnaire used in previous studies, we added specific bibliography which was highlighted in yellow in the revised version of manuscript (page 6, Line 6-7).

3. In the methods section: You wrote "a survey was conducted among the residents of a community, China." How did you select individuals that underwent questionnaires? Moreover, a multidimensional dietary questionnaire was designed. "The innovative questionnaire involved three dimensions, including food categories, intake frequency, and quantity per time, rather than simply classifying responses as "yes or no" as noted in previous studies." Did you validate it? Please, add as a supplementary file the questionnaire.

Answer: Thank you very much for your advice.

Part 1: The participants were selected by using simple random sampling, and 220 residents were included in this study. Related content has been highlighted in yellow in the revised version of manuscript (page 6, Line 27-29).

Part 2: Before this study, the formulation and verification of the questionnaire

went through the following steps:

1. Construct the basic framework of the questionnaire: Based on the literature review and the recommendations of IBS diet guidelines^[1,2], our research project group discussed and determined the foods that might be associated with IBS patients. According to the previous findings of our studies, the frequency division standard was defined^[3]. 25g was defined as one portion to evaluate the amount consumed each time by reference to the Dietary Guidelines for Chinese Residents (2016)^[4].

2. Expert inquiry: Expert consultation has been conducted on the preliminary questionnaire twice. Experts were asked to give constructive suggestions. The average content validity index (Ave-CVI) was 0.923, and the item level content validity index (I-CVI) was 0.833-1.000 (shown in Table 1)^[5]. Form the initial version of the questionnaire finally.

3. Preliminary survey of the initial version of the questionnaire: In October 2019, 15 IBS patients were selected to fill in the questionnaire from Gastroenterology Clinic of China-Japan Friendship Hospital. The results indicated that the questionnaire was easy to understand. The average time required to fill in the dietary questionnaire was approximately 15 minutes.

4. Reliability and validity test: The questionnaire was distributed to 140 patients. 132 valid samples were divided into two parts by random number table. One part (n = 60) conducted exploratory factor analysis to establish the model, and the other part (n = 72) conducted confirmatory factor analysis to test the model structure. Cronbach 'α coefficient was 0.681 , which indicated that the questionnaire had good internal consistency.

Part 3: We attached the food questionnaire to revised version of manuscript in the form of attachment (page 38-39).

4.In the results: In Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics, please, add IBS subtypes.

Answer: We agreed with the reviewer's opinion, and added IBS subtypes into "results" (page 10, Line 17-18) and Table 1 (page 33). Related content has been highlighted in yellow in the revised version of manuscript.

5. In the discussion: The discussion should be more focused on the limitations of the study.

Answer: We discussed the limitations of this study, which were highlighted in yellow in the revised version of manuscript (page 13, Line 19-21; page 14, Line 14-15, 23-25; page 15, Line 7-9, 14-17; page 16, Line 26; page 17, Line 7-16).

Answering reviewer 03659905

The article entitled "Differences in dietary habits of people with vs without irritable bowel syndrome and its association with symptom and psychological status" is an interesting original article. Title is appropriate, as well as abstract and references. Introduction is well performed, providing enough information to know the actual situation as well as the concerns to promote the study. Methodology is well explained, being easy to reproduce the study. Results are correct, providing a well-mixed information between tables/figures and text. Finally, discussion is well structured. In my personal opinion, there are none suggested modifications to the article. In addition, English language is correct. My final decision is to publish the paper.

Answer: Thank you for your affirmation of our research direction and significance. We hope it will bring new ideas to other researchers.

Answering re-reviewer 02155135

Thank you very much for giving us such valuable suggestions. We have made revisions or explanation point by point.

1. The detailed letter has responded to the majority of my concerns; however I asked: Did you validate it? From the author's response, there are statements of validity and reliability, however, if Authors claim that this questionnaire has been validated, a citation is needed. If not citation available, then it is not validated and it should be clearly stated in the method and discussed as limitation of the study.

Answer: Thank you very much for your advice. We revised the manuscript according to the reviewer's opinions (page 8, Line 23-26; page 12, Line 4-9,12-13; page 16, Line 26-28). The revised content emphasized the innovation of the questionnaire and the requirement for further validity and reliability test. Related content has been highlighted in yellow in the revised version of manuscript.

2. Moreover, you wrote in the Study setting From May 2020 to July 2020, a survey was conducted among the permanent residents using simple random sampling in a community, China. This answer explained the selection method, however, it did not clarify the community.

Answer: Thank you very much for your advice. We described the community in our re-submitted manuscript (page 6, Line 23-26). Related content has been highlighted in yellow in the revised version of manuscript.