

Format for ANSWERING REVIEWERS

May 22, 2015

Dear Editor,



Please find enclosed the edited manuscript in Word format (file name: 17807-edited.docx).

Title: Prevention of neural tube defects with folic acid: The Chinese experience

Author: Aiguo Ren

Name of Journal: *World Journal of Clinical Pediatrics*

ESPS Manuscript NO: 17807

The manuscript has been revised according to the suggestions of reviewers:

Reviewer No. 02446483:

I went through the manuscript and it is well written, although some minor English editing may be needed. Some sentences are too long and may need some re-wording. Misspelling is sometimes present, but mostly good writing. I would suggest to include a graphic showing that more than two-thirds of NTD-affected pregnancies were terminated before 28 weeks of gestation in the Shanxi rural population in early 2000s and the proportion is expected to be over 90% in urban populations and particularly the data indicating NTD and which one (encephalocele/spina bifida). The current prevalence is about 4-5 times higher than in the United States (5-7 per 10,000 births). This should also be demonstrated with data from Canada and USA. Moreover, a small paragraph should contemplate the aprosencephaly. Please read and cite this article: Sergi C, Schmitt HP. The vesicular forebrain (pseudo-aprosencephaly): a missing link in the teratogenetic spectrum of the defective brain anlage and its discrimination from aprosencephaly. *Acta Neuropathol.* 2000 Mar;99(3):277-84. PubMed PMID: 10663970.

Response:

- 1) Several long sentences have been shortened, and the final version has been edited by a native English speaker.
- 2) Reference No. 7 contains a graph showing the proportion of termination of pregnancies affected by NTDs, but does not specify the proportion of NTD subtypes. Therefore adding a graph in this editorial is infeasible.
- 3) The newest US NTD data is cited from reference No. 8. In addition, the NTD data in Shanxi Province have been updated based on the author's surveillance.
- 4) Although aprosencephaly may be classified as a disorder of the brain, but neural tube defects do not include aprosencephaly, according to the textbooks, such as *Neural Tube Defects* by Jorge A Lazareff, World Scientific Publishing Company; 1 edition (October 25, 2010).

Reviewer No. 646241:

In their paper "Prevention of neural tube defects with folic acid: The Chinese experience", the author presents an interesting and important overview of present knowledge regarding then worldwide, and specifically Chinese incidence of neural tube defects, the role of folic acid intake, and the role of nutrition in the high incidence of neural tube deficiencies in China. Also, some ideas for possible strategies in order to improve the situation are presented. The work is well written, in good language

(as far as I, as a non-native speaker, may judge) including numerous important details. However, in contrast to the given headline of the paper, the work does not contain very many details on given intervention programs or active experiences in the country. Neither does the activity in order to improve folic acid supplementation of the population seem to be very strong in the moment, nor are there strong plans to do so in the future. Thus, as a conclusion, the “Chinese experience” seems to be one of some fatalism. If it is one aim of the work to improve folic acid supplementation in the population, the need for such an initiative should be stressed a bit more in the paper. Minor errors: on page 3 instead of fresh vegetables and fruits better write fresh vegetables and fruit on page 4 instead of The author hope that these problems can be solved so that fortified flour and/or rice will become commercially available. better write The author hopes that these problems can be solved so that fortified flour and/or rice will become commercially available.

Response:

1) China is unique in NTD prevalence and in the preventive measures taken to combat NTDs. Many governments did nothing in NTD prevention, and others mandated staple food fortification with folic acid. The Chinese government implemented a nationwide folic acid supplementation program in rural areas where the NTD prevalence is high, and the supplements are paid by the government. This action is unique in the world, although the cost-effectiveness needs further investigation when compared with fortification. In the revised version, more details regarding the intervention program have been added, with an addition of changes in NTD prevalence.

2) Errors in English writing have been corrected, and the final version has been edited by a native English speaker. According to the native English speaker, it is correct to use “fruits” when writing together with “vegetables”.

A citation has been added and the references have been revised according to the Journal’s style.

Some other minor changes have been made.

Sincerely yours,



Aiguo Ren, MD, PhD
Institute of Reproductive and Child Health
Peking University
38 College Road
Haidian District
Beijing 100191
PR. China
Email: renag@bjmu.edu.cn
Phone: +86-10-82801140