

Authors' response letter

The Editor-in-Chief

World Journal of Gastroenterology

Dear Editor,

Thank you for your comments as well as the outstanding suggestions and comments made by the reviewers. We have diligently reviewed each comment and addressed the concerns and suggestions. Below, you will find detailed responses to the reviewer's comments. We are excited to have this manuscript considered for publication by the World Journal of Gastroenterology and welcome any further suggestions and/or comments.

Yours sincerely,

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Reviewer's comments

Detailed review of some other specific search terms e.g "hygiene hypothesis", "smoking and IBD" may have yielded more and more recent studies to include in your review

We conducted further searches in PUBMED under the search terms "hygiene hypothesis" and "smoking and IBD" based on the reviewer's suggestions. We found a total of 2128 articles under the search term "hygiene hypothesis". We further refined the search using the search terms "hygiene hypothesis" AND "IBD" and found 34 relevant articles. We selected 2 recently published articles (references 10, 109) that added new information to the review. We found 446 articles under the search terms "smoking and IBD" and selected 4 recently published articles (references 13,14,18,19) that added new information to the review. We were selective in the choice of the articles with emphasis on the hierarchy of evidence and impact of the results of the selected studies on the evidence from older studies. We revised the sections on smoking and IBD and hygiene hypothesis to reflect this new information with track changes and modified the bibliography according to WJG style. We have attached the conflict of interest statements as a separate PDF document.

