Dear Editor

It's a great honor to get your comments on the article. Thank you for your suggestions, which I have carefully considered and adopted.

Q1: The inclusion criteria of non sepsis group were not clearly stated.

A: The inclusion criteria for the non-sepsis patients were as follows: 18–75 years old; and patients admitted to the ICU at the same period owing to diseases other than sepsis, such as multiple injuries and high-risk operations. Of note, we tried to match the age, underlying disease and surgical site with those in patients in the sepsis group. Because there was no definite infection, non-sepsis group were not given antibiotics before the fecal samples were collected.

Q2: Is the underlying disease in the non sepsis group consistent with that in the sepsis group? The influence factors of intestinal flora are complex ,It is suggested to further refine the baseline data of patients.

A: The underlying disease of patients in sepsis and non-sepsis groups were divided into three categories: multiple injuries, malignant tumors, and other diseases（Including benign tumor, intestinal obstruction and so on）.At the same time,there were no statistically significant differences in underlying diseases and operation types between the sepsis and non-sepsis groups as revealed by a χ^2 test (P > 0.05), indicating that the data were balanced and comparable among the groups.

Table 1 Comparison of the general information among the three groups of individuals

Indicator	Control group (n = 10)	Non-sepsis group (n = 10)	Sepsis group (n = 10)	H/F/χ^2/Z/t value	P value
Age (years, $\bar{x} \pm s$)	55 (48.75, 55.25)	59 (50.00, 74.00)[a]	63.50 (44.75, 76.25)[ab]	2.05	0.36
BMI (kg/m², $\bar{x} \pm s$)	23.95 ±2.04	27.19 ± 4.40[a]	23.91 ±4.09 [ab]	2.64	0.09
Underlying disease(cases)				0.84	0.65
Multiple injuries		3	4		
Malignant tumor		5	3		
Other diseases		2	3		
Type of operation (cases)				0.00	1.00
Surgery on abdominal	-	5	5		

hollow viscera					
Surgery on non-abdominal hollow viscera	-	5	5		
APACHE II score on day 1 (points, M [P_{25}, P_{75}])	-	10.00 (7.00, 17.00)	19.00 (15.25, 21.50)	−2.40	0.02
SOFA score on day 1 (points, $\bar{x} \pm s$)	-	3.30 ±1.42	10.80 ±2.97	−7.20	0.00

Note: APACHE II score, Acute Physiologic Assessment and Chronic Health Evaluation II Scoring System; SOFA score, Sequential Organ Failure Assessment Score; BMI, body mass index.