

May 14, 2014

Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed the edited manuscript in Word format (file name: 10286-Edited.doc).



Title: Consumption of garlic and risk of colorectal cancer: An updated meta-analysis of prospective studies

Author: Jiyi Hu, Yiwang Hu, Jiaojiao Zhou, Mengwen Zhang, Dan Li, Shu Zheng

Name of Journal: *World Journal of Gastroenterology*

ESPS Manuscript NO: 10286

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

1 Format has been updated

2 Revision has been made according to the suggestions of the reviewers and editors.

- (1) "Authors' department" was added.
- (2) "Author contributions" was added.
- (3) Telephone and fax number was added.
- (4) Key words and core tip were added.
- (5) Authors' abbreviation names and manuscript title were added.
- (6) The acknowledgement section was deleted.
- (7) "Comments" section was added.
- (8) Figure 1 was replaced with its decomposable version.

(9) Reviewer's question 1: Why didn't you analyze individual patient data from studies?

Answer: Truly, a pooled analysis of individual data would generate more reliable results; however, we could not get access to the original data of these studies.

(10) Reviewer's question 2: Why did you choose the Newcastle-Ottawa scale, an instrument not already validated?

Answer: Deeks et al. identified 194 tools for quality assessment of non-randomized studies. Among those, the two most useful tools are the Downs and Black instrument and the Newcastle-Ottawa scales (NOS). The NOS is endorsed by The Cochrane Collaboration for assessing the quality of non-randomized studies. And it has been applied in many meta-analyses including some high quality ones, since it was developed in 2008. We chose the NOS mainly because it is simple and widely used. In addition, it can help us to identify high-quality studies using a pre-defined criteria. Though a recent study (Hartling 2013, Journal of Clinical Epidemiology) testing the NOS indicated revisions and more specific guidance is needed to apply the NOS for quality assessment.

(11) Reviewer's question 3: Are there other validated instrument that would be better?

Answer: A few other instruments are also widely used for quality assessment. Such as the Downs and Black instrument, which contains more items than NOS, though some of the items were difficult to apply. Critical Appraisal skills Programme (CASP) tools and checklists are also widely used to assess the quality of epidemiological studies. Strengthening the Reporting of Observational Studies in Epidemiology (STROBE) Statement, containing a set of checklists for the evaluation of non-randomized studies, is being endorsed by a growing number of biomedical journals. In addition, the instrument developed through the Evidence-based Practice Centers (EPC) program provides another useful alternative. However, these instruments were not used in our study because some of

the items were difficult to apply. Thus we cannot tell if they would be better for assessment of studies included in our research.

3 References and typesetting were corrected. For references not indexed by PubMed, the first page of the full reference is submitted.

Thank you again for publishing our manuscript in the *World Journal of Gastroenterology*.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shu Zheng' in a cursive, flowing style.

Shu Zheng, MD, FACS
Professor of Surgery
Scientific Director of Cancer Institute, Zhejiang University
Vice President (area) of ISUCRS
88 Jiefang Road, Hangzhou, 310009
Tel: +86-571-87784501
Fax: +86-571-87214404
E-mail: zhengshu@zju.edu.cn