

Dear reviewers and editors,

Thank you for your letter and for the reviewer's comments concerning our manuscript entitled "prognostic and pathological impact of tumor budding in gastric cancer: A systematic review and meta-analysis". The comments have been carefully taken into account and a new revised submission have been uploaded. The responses are as follows,

To reviewer # 02446277:

To question 1: We have added this sentence "The patients were divided into those with high-grade tumor budding and those with low-grade tumor budding, and the cut-off values for tumor budding varied across the included studies" into the Methods(Page3).

To question 2: We have changed the "tumor differentiation" to "undifferentiated tumors status".

To question 3: We are very sorry for our incorrect writing. Fig4 is the wrong marker, the sentence of "The test for heterogeneity was significant using random-effects model ($I^2 = 66.1\%$, $P = 0.019$) (Figure 5). Furthermore, when the subgroups were stratified by patient number, the heterogeneity of the studies with > 200 patients ($I^2 = 0.0\%$, $P = 0.573$) and the studies with < 200 patients ($I^2 = 0.0\%$, $P = 0.346$) (Figure 5) were totally eliminated" should be used to describe Fig5.

To question 4: We have deleted this sentence.

To question 5: We revised this sentence, "In this meta-analysis, no heterogeneity was observed, except in the studies on tumor budding associated with lymph node metastasis and tumor stage".

To question 6: We have changed the "undifferentiated patients" to "undifferentiated tumor samples".

To reviewer # 03769068:

To question 1: We have re-edited and beautified the pictures.

To question 2: We have used language editing services and polish the expression of English.

We appreciate for Editors/Reviewers' warm work earnestly, and hope that the correction will meet with approval.

Once again, thank you very much for your comments and suggestions.

**Sincerely yours,
En-hao Zhao**