***Helicobacter pylori dupA* and smoking are associated with increased levels of IL-8 in gastric mucosa in Iraq—reply**

Thank you very much for your letter showing that full-length *dupA*-type strains and smoking were independently associated with IL-8 levels. IL-8 mRNA levels are associated with polymorphonuclear neutrophil (PMN) infiltration and considered to be correlated with pathological change. Previously, we reported the importance of *dupA* in several papers [1,2]. Therefore their report was really interesting for us. We agree with the comments, and we plan to analyze the *dupA* genotype of strains isolated from Bhutan and the Dominican Republic. In our experiments, there was also no relationship between gender and mucosal IL-8 expression, in agreement with the Letter to the Editor by Hussein and Tuncel. As for smoking, the information from some patients was missing; however, we also try to gather the information. As pointed out, mean ages in our study were different between Bhutan and Dominican Republic. In our data, there was no significant relationship between age and mucosal IL-8 expression in both countries; therefore we evaluated IL-8 expression levels without adjusting ages between the two groups. It is true that many factors, including bacterial, environmental and host factors, are involved in IL-8 expression from gastric mucosa, and we should always take into account these factors as much as we can get the information.

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