**Response to the reviewers**

PONE-D-20-17129 COVID-19

From: Dr. Marc Souris, Directeur de Recherche, UMR 190 « Unités des virus émergents »

Object: Rebuttal letter to PONE-D-20-17129 COVID-19 review untitled “Spatial Analysis of Hospital Case-Fatality Rate in France” by Marc Souris and Jean-Paul Gonzalez.

To PLOS ONE Editor

Dear Editor,

You will find enclosed the revised version of the manuscript that addresses the last comment raised by the reviewer #4 (the only one that had comments). As requested, our re-submission includes the following items:

* **The present letter** as a rebuttal letter responding in detail to each point raised by the reviewer.
* **A marked-up copy of our manuscript** with all changes made to the original version (file ”Revised Manuscript\_4\_with Track Changes”).
* **A copy of our manuscript** using track changes as been uploaded as a \*supporting information\* file.
* **An unmarked version** of our revised paper without tracked changes (file “Revised Manuscript\_4.docx”, clean copy of the edited manuscript uploaded as the new \*manuscript\* file)

Please find below our answers addressing the comments raised by the reviewer#4.

1) *The authors currently put in the last sentence of Abstract “…, suggesting marked international inconsistency in case reporting and death ascertainment/coding”, which is exactly what I commented—it is an implication from the results, not the direct results. Note that it is a very strong statement. Therefore, please remove it from Abstract and leave it only in Discussion.*

Answer: we removed the statement from the abstract.

Dear Editor, we thank you for your kind consideration of our reviewed manuscript.

Dr. Marc Souris

Dr. Jean-Paul Gonzalez