Author's response to reviews

Title: Establishing confidence in the output of qualitative research synthesis: the ConQual approach

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Response to Reviewer's

We would like to thank the reviewer for their comments and for taking the time to assist in highlighting some of the grammatical errors in the article. We have made comprehensive changes to the paper based on this feedback, focusing particularly on the grammar and writing style as this was a major concern. Following is a point by point response to the reviewer's comments.

Reviewer 1:

Major Revisions

1. I appreciate the inclusion of the discussion of CerQual in the context of ConQual. I believe this is an important addition. I do believe the authors need to expand on the differences between CerQual and ConQual and when ConQual should be used instead of CerQual. I understand that the authors are using ConQual specifically with the meta-aggregate method. I am still unclear of why a tool focused on meta-aggregate synthesis is needed. An obvious next question is why different tools are needed for each of the methods of qualitative synthesis. It seems as though one evaluation method for all qualitative synthesis would be most efficient. Finally, I would have to agree with reviewer #2 that these names are quite similar and it was confusing to read at times.

Thank you for your feedback. As the author's expertise is in the area of meta-aggregative reviews it was with this approach in mind that ConQual was developed. In our opinion ConQual could be used for all qualitative systematic reviews but as the final grading is based on the assigned levels of credibility and response to the critical appraisal checklist used for meta-aggregative reviews, it is particularly suited to meta aggregation as described within the article.

It is difficult to provide concrete guidance on when one should use CerQual rather than ConQual, given both are new, there is no evaluative work that has been completed and published to date. We do not wish to prescribe the ConQual approach as the only approach that can be used and would rather let the researchers chose the tool they think most appropriate. We have made some revisions to the article based on this direction.

We agree that one evaluation method may be efficient and we would like to propose ConQual for consideration as that one method. However, being realists, we understand that the field of qualitative research synthesis is characterised by a number of approaches with similar but different methods, hence we expect that consensus on only one approach would be difficult to reach.

They do have similar names, with a similar aim, but two very different approaches. We do not consider this as an issue warranting a change of the carefully chosen name, for this approach.

2. I would agree with reviewer #2 that the research column seems redundant. The explanation on page 14 did not really address this question. Perhaps an example of what else could be written in the research type column would be helpful.

Thank you for your feedback. We have provided justification when discussing this column within the document. The main reason is to highlight to readers that this is coming from qualitative research. Another reason this column has been included is because there may be

Minor essential revisions

3. Overall, I would recommend the authors re-read the manuscript and pay close attention to the grammar. Below are some grammar edits, but I am assuming I missed some errors. I did not correct any comma omission or misplacements. These were extensive throughout the entire paper. Additionally, I would recommend considering modifying the manuscript to be in active voice, rather than passive voice. Finally, the authors should pay close attention to verb agreement.

We have gone through the paper carefully and have paid close attention to grammar. We have made edits to all areas that you have highlighted plus additional changes where required. Once again we would like to thank the reviewer for spending the time to carefully read through this article and for providing grammatical assistance.