Author's response to reviews

Title: Brokered Dialogue: A new research method for addressing controversial health and social issues

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To Whom It May Concern:

Please find enclosed a copy of our manuscript entitled “Brokered Dialogue: A new research method for controversial health and social issues” (Authors: Parsons and Lavery), which we hope you will consider for publication in your journal. We believe that the new qualitative film-based research method we have developed and describe in our paper will be of considerable interest to your readers.

This innovative method (which we call Brokered Dialogue) is designed specifically to study controversial issues in health and social care. There are many controversies in the field of health care and health policy, so we foresee numerous possible contexts for application. While we piloted the method in the context of controversial drug funding decisions and their uptake (drug policy field), we are currently using it to study a new Canadian provincial citizens’ council on drug system reform and to examine the scientific controversy surrounding so-called ‘liberation therapy’ for multiple sclerosis (also known as the CCSVI controversy). We provide a web link within the article to our first completed film of this pilot work (entitled Venus & Mars: A Brokered Dialogue). We encourage readers to access this film, so that they may see the method ‘in action’.

In our paper we outline the theoretical background and rationale for the method, our approach to sampling, data collection and analysis, participatory editing and the assembly of footage into a final dialogic film. We also outline the ethical considerations important to undertaking film-based research. Based on data gathered via filmed interviews, we analyze both the visual data as well as the textual data from interview transcripts. While Brokered Dialogue is a research methodology, it also poses potential opportunities for resolving controversies, because it promotes respectful interactions among those with seemingly divergent views and identifies potential pathways through which the issue might be resolved or improved.

Given your journal’s international reach, we felt our manuscript would be of interest to many of your readers, including qualitative researchers, those employing mixed methods, health services researchers, policy makers, practitioners, social scientists, arts-based health researchers, and experts in knowledge translation and social media. We have structured our paper as a ‘Debate’ article as per your journal’s guidelines.
We hope that you will consider publishing our manuscript in *BMC Medical Research Methodology*. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you for considering our submission.

Sincerely,

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