Author’s response to reviews

Title: Hope and Connection: The Experience of Family Caregivers of Persons with Dementia Living in a Long Term Care Facility

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Author’s response to reviews:


Re: Revisions for Study: Hope and Connection: The Experience of Family Caregivers of Persons with Dementia Living in a Long-Term Care Facility.

Dear Editor,

We wish to thank the reviewers for their comments and have revised the manuscript accordingly using track changes. All editorial suggestions have been made and we have had an English-speaking person edit the manuscript for us as suggested by the editor. Particular attention was made to rewriting the abstract. The specific revisions to the manuscript are as follows:

Reviewer No. 1

1. Page 9 – under descriptions of hope – the sentence starting with “They described their own” was removed.

2. Discretionary revision requested – to describe implications for practice. Implications for practice were added to the conclusion. As well a comment was made that more research is needed to understand what those implications maybe.

Reviewer No. 2

Major compulsory Revisions:

1. Clarification in relation to theoretical sampling for interpretive description: Two sentences were added to the sampling section to clarify theoretical sampling.

2. Descriptions of hope, 1st paragraph: A quote from a participant was inserted to support the participant’s hope for a healthy and peaceful life.

Minor Essential Revisions:

1. Background – 2nd paragraph: The reviewer asked how is physical
determined/arrived at in relation to the psychosocial resource of hope? This was revised by replacing the word “physical” with “psychological”.

2. Background, 3rd paragraph: The reviewer raised the concern that mentioning power inequities and advocacy gives the impression that our study may be looking at these experiences of caregivers of LTC in addition to hope. An additional sentence was added to clarify that this sentence in the background was used as part of the argument for why we need to study the hope of informal caregivers with persons with dementia in LTC, as previous studies have focused on those in the community.

3. Theoretical sampling: We can understand the reviewer’s confusion about the use of the term theoretical sampling as it is also used in grounded theory. Thorne does borrow this concept from grounded theory. However Thorne’s interpretive description approach also uses the term in a different way. Theoretical sampling “explicitly builds the sampling strategy from the theoretical variations that drive the data” (Thorne, 2008, p.91). However the intent is different than when utilized in grounded theory as the purpose of the study is not to build a theory, but to uncover knowledge that is relevant for clinical practice (Thorne, p. 92). Thorne’s approach borrows from phenomenology, ethnography and grounded theory. A description of theoretical sampling as defined by Thorne was added to the sampling section to clarify this issue.

4. Context: An introductory sentence was written to explain what the paragraph is about. At the end of the section, a sentence was added to reflect how the points were connected.

5. Descriptions of Hope: The reviewer commented that the organization of this paragraph needs some work and states that the overarching theme of hope and connection surfaced without any lead up to it. This section was reorganized and two sentences were added to the descriptions of hope to tie it with the overall arching theme.

6. Descriptions of Hope: Are all of the quotes relevant and about the same hope? It was clarified that the some of the quotes were about positive outcomes of hope. Also, some of the descriptions were more general, while others were unique to the experience of caring for a person with dementia.

7. Descriptions of hope, 1st paragraph: “..at the same time…they expressed feeling of hope and hopelessness – a word was missing . In rewriting this section, this sentence was removed.

8. Accepting where we are : Under this theme, two sentences were added about how the acceptance of the situation enhanced the connection between caregivers and residents in LTC.

9. Living life in the moment: The reviewer asked if there were any differences between a wish and hope as the dynamic possibilities for a better future. A sentence was added to this section, as the data does not suggest a difference between a wish and hope, but rather that future can be defined as a moment as
well as months and years.

10. Balancing dual worlds – 1st paragraph – Two sentences were added to explain the concept “dual world”.

11. Discussion: Clarification is needed regarding hope and connection as an indivisible dual element or are they separate. From our data, hope and connection does emerge as an indivisible dual element. Sentences were added to reflect that.

12. Discussion: Why are the relational aspects of hope important and discuss where you see its place/impact in practice? A sentence was added to the conclusion.

13. Discussion: The reviewer asked that the link between disease progression, the environment and hope be clarified. This paragraph was revised to clarify the link.

14. Discussion, 2nd paragraph: The reviewer asked us to clarify whether the dual worlds are relational or physical. Sentences were added to suggest that the dual worlds are both physical and relational.

15. Discussion, 2nd paragraph – Clarify how do pathways of hope differ from themes being important to hope. Two sentences were added to suggest that we don’t know if they are different and recommend more research in this area.

16. Discretionary Revisions

1. Methods Design – 1st paragraph – The specific ethics review board and its location was added.

2. Data Collection – 2nd paragraph – What gives you hope? This sentence was revised by removing the question marks.

3. Data Collection – 3rd paragraph – question in regards to our statement: “second interviews were conducted to clarify what was discussed in the first interview” – This is not a form of member-checking, where the findings are confirmed by participants. Thorne suggests that member-checking is not a good idea, as the findings are the results of interpretation of the data. In the manuscript we used the term ‘clarify’ not confirm. Clarify means we asked them to discuss more in-depth what was said. However, as this raised a concern by the reviewer, the word “clarify” was removed from the description of the data collection and replaced with “explore in depth”. The purpose of the third interview was also clarified.

4. Results – 1st paragraph – the sentences: “The two friends of a….and “Three participants were sisters…were condensed

5. Accepting where we are: wording was changed to reflect how coming to terms with the situation can result in a positive connection
6. Living life in the moment – 1st paragraph – wording was changed to denote how a daughter’s experience with her mother’s dementia has made her more aware of the importance of living in the moment.

These revisions have resulted in a very much improved manuscript. We hope that we have sufficiently addressed the concerns.

Sincerely

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