Author's response to reviews

Title: Associations between quality of life and socioeconomic factors, functional impairments and dissatisfaction with received information and home-care services among survivors living at home two years after stroke onset

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Version: 3 Date: 15 April 2014

Author's response to reviews: see over
Reviewer's report 1

**Title:** Associations between quality of life and socioeconomic factors, functional impairments and dissatisfaction with received information and home-care services among survivors living at home two years after stroke onset

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 31 March 2014

**Reviewer:** Richard Lindley

**Reviewer's report:**
Thank you for responding to my comments. As a result the manuscript is much clearer. Please note that there are still some typographical errors "stoke" instead of stroke.

Many thanks. The paper has been checked again.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published
The English has been revised by a professional translator native to the U.K.

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare I have no competing interests.
Reviewer's report 2

**Title:** Associations between quality of life and socioeconomic factors, functional impairments and dissatisfaction with received information and home-care services among survivors living at home two years after stroke onset

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 24 March 2014

**Reviewer:** REG MORRIS

**Reviewer's report:**

Comments on Revision of;

Associations between quality of life and socioeconomic factors, functional impairments and dissatisfaction with received information and home-care services among survivors living at home two years after stroke onset.
Michèle Baumann, Etienne Le Bihan, Kénora Chau and Nearkasen Chau
BMC Neurology (Submitted:2013-01-10)

**General**

The authors have taken account of the reviewers’ comments and have made major improvements to the original draft. The language is now much clearer and the conclusions and questions are a better fit to the methodology employed. The statistical analyses have been largely clarified.

Many thanks for your valuable help.

There are a number of ways in which the paper could be improved further, in particular there remains some over-interpretation of the outcomes and there is an issue concerning the description of change in QoL dimensions. Moreover, the impact of the article would be enhanced by revising the Introduction and Discussion sections so that they are more succinct and focused on key questions and conclusions. This would be helpful to readers, but even in their present forms these sections contain relevant background and commentary, respectively. It is an editorial decision whether the authors should be asked to revise these sections.

Many thanks again. We have improved the paper again.

**Major Compulsory Revisions**

There remains an issue that I think may be linguistic and is potentially confusing to readers. In the Abstract, Results and Discussion sections the authors talk about NESQOL dimensions as being ‘decreased’, ‘altered’ or ‘affected’. All these terms imply temporal change, but this study took measurements at only one time point. What is being measure is participants’ perceptions of change pre- to poststroke.

This needs to be made clear. It is especially important in the Results section of the Abstract that readers are told that participants perceived a decrease in QoL dimensions. Also in the Results and Discussion where these terms are used.
Your comment is pertinent. We have replaced them with “low” or rewritten the passages concerned.

In the Statistical Analysis section it would be better to refer to newsqol domains as interval level variables (since continuous could mean interval or ratio level) and the demographic domains as nominal level variables. With regression coefficients, it is more usual to give the standard error (95% CI is given for the odds ratios, which are not of concern here).

In the Results section the data in Tables 1, 2 and 3 are largely repeated in the text. This is unnecessary and only points of particular note require further explication in the text.
Yes, we have retained only the most significant results in the text.

The sentence “Survivors had markedly altered QoL….” Should be “Survivors perceived marked change in QoL since their stroke….”. (See above). The sentence has been rewritten as follows, “the survivors perceived QoL was markedly low for…”

The following two statements in the first paragraph of the Discussion require explanation or deletion. I would recommend the latter since they seem to be over-interpreting the outcome of the study.
“The newsqol appeared to be relevant to identify the functional impairments which needed to be treated, to determine necessary information, care and help for the survivors through patient-family-carer collaboration promoting a patient centred approach.”
“Our study further highlights that carers may need to know the expectations of survivors, and that public policy may need to help them to face up to their responsibilities.”
Yes, the two sentences have been suppressed.

The third paragraph of the Discussion, starting; “Our study reports that ….”. The authors are once again not acknowledging that this study is cross-sectional and can only demonstrate association and not causation. “Repercussions” of impairments on QoL were not demonstrated, only an association which could have been in either direction.
Yes, we agree with you and have made changes accordingly. Some passages concerning the literature are correct and have been retained.

Similarly in the fifth paragraph where the authors talk about newsqol dimensions that reflect depression being ‘the most affected by dissatisfaction…’ There is subsequent acknowledgement that the relationship may be bilateral (bi-directional would be a better term). But it would be better to temper this conclusion at the outset by noting an association that could be interpreted either way and then perhaps giving evidence for the preferred interpretation.
Yes.

**Minor Essential Revisions**
Check format of references, particularly consistency in citation of part numbers. These are cited for some journals but not for others.
Yes.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published.
*The English has been revised by a professional translator native to the U.K.*

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
*I declare that I have no competing interests*