Author's response to reviews

Title: Perceived needs and satisfaction with care in people with multiple sclerosis: a two-year prospective study

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Ms Norton,

Thank you very much for the valuable comments from reviewers regarding our manuscript, ID 1370551694192841, entitled “Perceived needs and satisfaction with care in people with multiple sclerosis: a two-year prospective study”.

The manuscript, which is now resubmitted, has been revised and our responses to the comments from the reviewers are presented below.

**Reviewer 1**

I am disappointed by the authors' responses to most of my comments. I am accustomed to seeing more-positive responses to constructive suggestions. I have the impression that the authors want to change their manuscript as little as possible. For example, I suggested (as a discretionary revision) a further analysis of the relation between receipt of immunomodulatory treatment and participants' feeling burdened by the costs of care. The authors offered the excuse that they do not have data on the participants' financial situation, and they believe that the question is somewhat outside the scope of their study. The analysis that I suggested would not require such data; I referred only to "appropriate covariates," in addition to receipt of immunomodulatory treatment. Further, if the question is outside the scope of the study, why did the authors introduce it? I have some additional suggestions, but I am not very enthusiastic about this manuscript.

Authors' response:

The aim of the present study was to explore the perceived needs concerning different health-related services and satisfaction with care of people with MS during a two-year period. One finding among our results was that the costs of care were considered burdensome by 75% and in the Discussion we have brought up possible explanations for this finding, as we have with several other findings. We agree with the reviewer that this finding and plausible explanations would be of interest to further explore in future studies and we regret that we are unable to perform a subgroup analysis of this particular finding as it would make us draw conclusions based on incomplete data.

1. At the top of page 9, the meaning of the sentence that begins "On a group level" is not clear, in part because the authors have not defined a group (or groups). (The same sentence [up to the semicolon] appears in the Results section of the abstract and also at the bottom of page 12.) I believe the authors are talking about variations over time, as they state in the Conclusions section on page 15. They should make the role of time explicit in the places where it is not now explicit, and perhaps avoid referring to "a group level."

Authors' response:

The following sentence is altered in Results, first sentence, paragraph 4:

On a group level there were no statistically significant variations in proportions of PwMS with perceived needs…

The new sentence is:
During the study period there were no statistically significant variations over time in the proportion of PwMS with perceived needs...

The following text is altered in Discussion, paragraph 11:
On a group level, there were no statistically significant variations in proportions of PwMS with perceived needs concerning various health-related services during the study period. However, on the individual level variations in perceived needs as well as in satisfaction with care were found.

The new text is:
During the study period there were no statistically significant variations in the proportion of PwMS with perceived needs with regard to various health-related services. However, over time, individual variations in perceived needs and in satisfaction with care were found.

The following text is altered in the Results section of the abstract:
On a group level there were no significant variations in proportions of people with MS with perceived needs concerning different health-related services during the study period.

The new text is:
There were no statistically significant variations over time in the proportion of people with MS with perceived needs concerning different health-related services during the study period.

2. In the list of percentages at the middle of page 9, why is 60.5% not rounded? Several of the other percentages would end in 0.5% if carried out to tenths of a percent. Also, shouldn't the 56% for "information on social insurance/vocational rehabilitation" be 57%?

Authors' response:
60.5% has been rounded to 60% and the 56% for "information on social insurance/vocational rehabilitation" is corrected and altered to 57%.

3. Table 3 would be much more accessible to readers if the Need column were expanded to include a column of percentages (rounded to the nearest multiple of 1%) and the columns of numbers under Satisfied were replaced by columns of percentages with the number on the same row in the Need column as a base. For example, the three entries for Physiotherapy/Sometimes would be 42, 37, and 20 (correctly rounded percentages do not always add up to exactly 100%, and it would be a mistake to "adjust" them to have that total). This treatment will allow readers to see the distribution of satisfaction for each level of perceived need, without burdensome mental arithmetic.

Authors' response:
Changes have been made to Table 3 according to the reviewer's suggestions.

4. The paragraph on pages 11 and 12 is much too long; it covers nearly two pages! The topics that it discusses should logically yield a sequence of much smaller paragraphs. I easily found nine such paragraphs. Similarly, the paragraph on pages 12 and 13 could be broken up into at least three shorter paragraphs.

Authors' response:
The second paragraph in Discussion has been broken up into nine shorter paragraphs and the third paragraph in Discussion has been broken up into three shorter paragraphs. Furthermore the Background section has been broken up into shorter paragraphs to improve the readability.
Reviewer 1
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
Authors’ response: We have consulted another language editor and hope that the language has been improved.

We hope that you will find the changes satisfactory. Should you have any further considerations and comments, please, contact us again.

We are looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

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