Author's response to reviews

Title: Perceptions and actions of healthcare professionals regarding mother-child relationship in an intermediate neonatal intensive care unit: a qualitative study

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Ms. JanelynAnn Cruz
Journal Editorial Office
BioMed Central
BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth

Dear Ms. JanelynAnn Cruz,

Please find enclosed our revised version of the manuscript MS: 1140415060118685 “Perceptions and actions of healthcare professionals regarding mother-child relationship with premature babies in an intermediate neonatal intensive care unit: a qualitative study”.

All the suggestions made by the reviewers were included in the text and are highlighted in blue. The answers to each comment are below.

Best regards

Maria Y Makuch; PhD

Reviewer's report

Reviewer: Cara Bicking Kinsey

Reviewer's report:
The authors have revised their manuscript to reflect the suggestions of the reviewers. Specifically, they have clarified that the population of infants was entirely premature infants. Also, they have greatly improved the manuscript with respect to the use of the theoretical framework of holding, and have consistently referred to holding throughout the manuscript. It is clear to me now how holding guides the study design and fits the results. They have also added one limitation.

The authors improved some aspects of their methods section by adding clarity about the thematic analysis process and removing the confusing idea of categories of analysis.

Despite the improvements that were made to the manuscript, I still have several concerns. First, now that I see their revisions did not address this issue, I feel very strongly that the authors did not complete a phenomenological study. They
do not follow phenomenological methods or cite any methodological references for this type of study. The word phenomenological was removed.

Furthermore, the portions of the manuscript that are newly written are often grammatically awkward, and do not read as clearly as the original. I feel that there are editorial issues that remain, and should be addressed such as unclear sentences, sentences that are too long, missing words, and extra words. Some of these I detail in the sections below. Reviewed and improved

I consider the above recommendations and those that follow to all be Minor Essential Revisions.

In the title and abstract the term mother-child relationship is used. I believe it would be more appropriate to say “the mother-child relationship”, as they do in the rest of the manuscript. Done

In the abstract under Methods, the first sentence is incomplete. Completed

The issues of consistent use of “their” and “her” still remain, often with instances of inconsistency in the same sentence. For example, in the abstract and again in the Results (i.e. “They felt a great need to touch and hold her baby and when they were able to do so they became calmer.”) Reviewed and corrected

The last sentence of the abstract does not read clearly. I think an “and” may be missing? Improved

Second paragraph under Background has this statement with extra words, “and this interferes with the way how they interact” Improved

This sentence is worded very awkwardly, “Recent studies have evidenced the importance of the care, support and the relationship established between nurses, the newborn infant and their parents, both mothers and fathers, in the environment of neonatal care units” Improved

In the objective they say, “support of the HCPs for the development of this relationship”. However, that makes it seem that the HCPs are being supported. It should be re-worded such that it reads that the HCPs are giving support to the parents. Improved

From the first paragraph under Type of Study, this isn’t clear, “This approach permitted to hear the stories”. Also, in the same sentence, “their mothers”….is this referring to the HCPs? . Improved

In the next paragraph, you define NICU. This does not make sense to me. You completed the study in your NICU; there is no need for a definition of a NICU. I suggest you just tell the reader a little more about your NICU following the first sentence in that paragraph. The inclusion of the data followed a suggestion of the other reviewer. Improved

The last sentence under Data Analysis is not clear. . Improved

Last sentence, first paragraph under Results has a typo (were->where). Corrected
I appreciate that the authors have added, as requested, a statement to the Methods section that says interviews were conducted in Portuguese. However, they have not said who translated the quotes into English for the publication; knowing the fluency of this person would help with credibility. After translation were the quotes also back-translated by another person and verified either by a researcher or the participants themselves? Information included

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being Published

**Reviewer's report**

**Reviewer:** Tania McIntosh

**Reviewer's report:**
I feel that this paper is much improved by the included revisions. Attention has been paid to reviewer comments and these have been satisfactorily addressed.