Author’s response to reviews

Title: An Evaluation of the Integration of Non-Traditional Learning Tools into a Community Based Breast and Cervical Cancer Education Program: The Witness Project of Buffalo

Authors:

Dr Thelma C. Hurd MD (thelma.hurd@roswellpark.org)
Prof Paola Muti MD (muti@buffalo.edu)
Deborah O. Erwin PhD (erwindeboraho@uams.edu)
Sharita Womack PhD (sdwomack@buffalo.edu)

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PDF covering letter
Dear Sir,

Thank you for the detailed critique of our manuscript entitled “An Evaluation of the Integration of Non-Traditional Learning Tools into a Community Based Breast and Cervical Education Program: The Witness Project of Buffalo”. The manuscript has been revised with incorporation of the reviewers suggestions.

Response to Reviewer - Dr. Newman

1. “The difficulties identified in completing the training of the counselors within the 6-8 week timeframe raises the concern that the investigators might have been overreaching in the complexity of their training program’ – Based upon the success of our program after participants complete their training, we do not feel that our training goals have been over reaching.

2. “Additional information should be provided regarding the training program content.” The training content presented in this manuscript portrays all of the essential components of the training program.

3. “Do the authors have data that validates the need for a program a in-depth as the one that was utilized?” We initially followed the recommended training curriculum in the training manual which did not yield effective results in our population. The modifications that were made were based upon the educational needs of our population. This is detailed in the methods section “Training Interventions” in the subsection entitled “lay health advisors”.

4. “Did the investigators identify any profile for counselors predicting increased likelihood of successful training?” The number of trainees was too small to identify a profile for successful training.

Response to Reviewer - Dr. Sadler

1. The manuscript was reorganized as per the reviews suggestions. Specifically, in the methods section, the subtitle Witness Project Program design has been added and the details included in this section have been shortened.

2. A “Description of the Sample” has been moved from the results section and placed at the end of the methods section.

3. Witness Role Model and Lay Health Advisor training implementations have been moved from the results section and place in the methods sections under the subtitle “Training Interventions”.

4. The outcomes section was deleted and the information moved to the results section of the manuscript.

5. The summary statement of the Witness Project training

6. A conclusion has been added at the end of the manuscript.

Response to Editor

We do not share your concerns about potential identification of the trainee who required 6 months of training for two reasons. First, as the women are their training they attend 3
Witness Project programs as observers and then start to assist with the preparation and execution of programs. A woman does not start to give presentations until she feels that she is ready to speak. Several women who completed their training within 8 weeks chose not to present at programs for 1-2 months after completing their training. However they continued to attend and participate in program activities. Second, the individual who required additional training received one on one training in private sessions. Only the trainers know the time required for her to complete her training.

Again, thank you for review and acceptance of our manuscript.

Sincerely,
Thelma C. Hurd, MD