Author's response to reviews

Title: Facilitators and barriers to screening for child abuse in the emergency department

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Concerning 1733310722697481; Facilitators and barriers to screening for child abuse in the emergency department

Dear Dr. Romeo Atienza,

We would like to thank you for the opportunity to resubmit our paper again after revisions, and the reviewers for their additional comments regarding our manuscript. We think that the manuscript improved significantly by these comments. We are happy that our manuscript is being considered for publication in BMC Pediatrics.

We addressed the concerns of the reviewers and are pleased to send you a revised version of our manuscript. Attached please find our point-by-point response to the comments of the reviewers.

We look forward to your response in due course.

Yours sincerely, also on behalf of the co-authors,
Facilitators and barriers to screening for child abuse in the emergency department

Response to reviewer comments
We thank the reviewers for reading our manuscript again. We have carefully considered and included their additional comments into the manuscript, and feel that the manuscript has substantially improved. The edits we made to our manuscript are indicated below in italic.

Reviewer VT: The authors have answered my points sufficiently well to allow their manuscript to be published.
Authors’ response: We thank the reviewer for her positive advice on our manuscript.

Reviewer SM: Response to Q2: This point needs to be mentioned in the manuscript, preferably in the methods, but should at least be alluded to in the discussion, as a limitation.
2. How long had screening been undertaken in each hospital prior to the staff being surveyed?
Authors’ response: We thank the reviewer for this comment. We clarified this in the methods by adding the following sentence on p. 3.
All participating hospitals had an emergency department where children of all ages were treated. Some of these emergency departments had been undertaken screening for child abuse prior to the staff being surveyed. This period ranged from several years to just one year.
Additionally we added the following limitation to the discussion, p. 9.
At the beginning of our study screening for child abuse had been ongoing in
some of the participating emergency departments while others had not even started, this is also a limitation of this study.

Reviewer SM: Response to Q on limitations: you are still misrepresenting the true limitations of this work. They are not limited to the fact that the inspectorate had not yet published their report. They also include: a small group of professionals, of mixed professional background were approached for interview, and the implementation of screening was variable across the hospitals involved. These points must come across, and be satisfactorily dealt with in the discussion.

Authors’ response: We agree with the reviewer that this should be mentioned and we adjusted the limitations section of the discussion on p. 9.

A limitation to be mentioned for this study is that the interviews were conducted before the Health Care Inspectorate published its report, and some topics that were addressed in the report, such as registration and information, were not addressed in our interviews (4). Because we wanted to compare perspectives from different disciplines we interviewed professionals of mixed background. A limitation of this approach is that we interviewed small numbers per discipline.

At the beginning of our study screening for child abuse had been ongoing in some of the participating emergency departments while others had not even started, which is also a limitation of this study.

Reviewer SM: Some minor corrections relating to grammar are still required, as follows:

Methods

1. ‘The hospitals included one University (urban) children’s hospital, four urban teaching hospitals, and two rural periphery hospitals’. This should read ‘two rural peripheral hospitals’.

Authors’ response: We changed this in the manuscript on p. 3.

The hospitals included one university (urban) children’s hospital, four urban teaching hospitals, and two rural peripheral hospitals.

Reviewer SM:

2. ‘a child abuse hospital attendant, a forensic nurse specialized in the child abuse detection, and a senior child abuse researcher specialized in child abuse prevention’. This should read ‘ forensic nurse specialist in child abuse detection, and a senior child abuse researcher specialist in child abuse prevention’.

Authors’ response: We changed this in the manuscript on p. 4.

These child abuse experts were a pediatrician with expertise in prevention of child abuse, a forensic pediatrician, a child abuse hospital attendant, a forensic nurse specialist in the child abuse detection, and a senior child abuse researcher specialist in child abuse prevention.