Author's response to reviews

Title: Internet-based search of randomised trials relevant to mental health originating in the Arab world

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The Editor,
BMC Psychiatry.
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Dear Sir,

Further to your recent correspondence including reviewers' comments, please find the attached article which I am re-submitting as correspondence for publication in BMC Psychiatry.

The article entitled- Internet-based search of randomised trials relevant to mental health originating in the Arab world has now been changed in light of comments made by reviewers. These changes are indicated below.

All authors have read the paper and given permission for its submission. I (YT) am willing to act as the guarantor of this paper and accept responsibility for the conduct of the paper and the decision to submit. We hope to submit this paper as correspondence as you suggest.

Thank you for considering our article for publication and please contact me if I can be of any assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Yahya Takriti

Response to Reviewer's report (Z. Fedorowicz)

We have duly noted and responded to the very helpful points highlighted by the reviewer and have labelled these according to the headings used by the reviewer:

General;

Pg 4
We have clarified in the Methods section that all the searches done were manually and were performed on electronic databases.

Pg 2
We have added the word 'the'.
We have added the word ‘the’.

We replaced the word ‘reproducing’ with ‘detailing’ and stated that only tables of contents pages were available to us on this search.

Conclusion;
1) We have made more explicit reference to the lack of RCTs available on the internet
2) We have re-phrased the final sentence as suggested.
3) We have mentioned the possibility of ‘index bias’ occurring in the Discussion section.

Response to Reviewer’s report (J. Ioannidis)

We have duly noted and responded to the very helpful points highlighted by the reviewer and have labelled these according to the numbers used by the reviewer:

1) In the Abstract, we have tempered my initial comparison between the USA and the Arab World and moderated the wording accordingly.
2,3) These very useful points are touched upon in the Discussion section and we have stated that Western trials may indeed be just as relevant as Arab-based trials in local service provision. We have further added that other types of regional trials may be conducted, however, were not picked up in our study which focussed on RCTs.
4) This point was discussed in the Introduction section. It was not possible to report further.
5) We have shortened and moderated this paragraph within the Introduction.
6) We have modified ‘important’ for ‘concerted effort’, as it may be difficult to verify the earlier statement.
7) We have provided a table with the databases and their references in the body of text.
8) This is answered in part in the Discussion section (see 2 and 3) in as much as other important regional research may exist, in non-RCT studies, which have not been reported on in this paper, but are available on regional databases.
9) Publication bias as a possibility is now mentioned in the Discussion section.
10) We have deleted the word ‘enormous’ and moderated the terminology.
11) We have deleted the word ‘prollific’ and moderated the terminology.
12) We were unable to consistently provide more useful information in table 2 due to the variable information available on the trials available on the databases at the time of the searches.
13) The 5 trials are referenced in the tables now. We believe that the last trials may have been lost on initial submission due to a computing error.
14) This point has now been mentioned in the Discussion section with reference to the informative Isaakidis and the mention of a RCT increase in sub-saharan Africa.
15) This point again is now addressed in the Discussion section and reference has been made to the provided- Kent et al article, and the ethical duties of trials, which we could not speculate on due to limited trial information.
16) Although, this is a very pertinent question, we believe that this was probably outside the scope of this article and would have provided limited added interest.