Author's response to reviews

Title: The response of mental health professionals to clients seeking help to change or redirect same-sex sexual orientation

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Version: 3 Date: 7 January 2009

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Sabina Alem

Thank you for your e-mail response to this paper and the reviewers’ comments. We have revised the paper in line with their recommendations as follows:

**Reviewer Anthony D’Augelli**

**Major compulsory revisions**

a. We agree that our method may have slightly underestimated the frequency of practices described and have added this comment to the Discussion (page 18).

b. We have clarified our use of terms in the paper (page 6).

c. We have updated the references in the paper (in particular page 19). The reason why we did not cite more recent references is that the work does not concentrate on reparative therapy as reported in United States. It concerns more general treatments as given by some therapists in the UK. There are no recent published studies of the efficacy of this kind of therapy. However, we have taken the advice of the reviewer and updated the review of reparative therapy as he suggests.

d. We have modified comments in the concluding paragraph in which the reviewer felt we were exaggerating. We now suggest that inherent attitudes of clinicians “may” (rather than “are likely to”) allow for discrimination. This is supported both by cited previous research (references 12-15 and 19) and by the willingness of a proportion of our respondents to embark on treatment to change sexual attraction from same sex to heterosexual in the absence of a robust evidence base. We propose that best practice guidelines may help. We have also replaced the phrase “are needed” with “could be useful”

e. We now provide a complete citation for Platzer.

**Minor essential revisions**

a. We now explain more clearly how we conducted the thematic content analysis (page 7).

b. We have doubled the number of quotes used to illustrate the qualitative themes (pages 11 to 15).

c. The reviewer notes that more men were subject to therapy. In doing so, he refers to reparative therapy but we emphasise again our study was not about reparative therapy. We already have a comment in the Discussion about the history of therapies which were much more likely to involve men.

**Discretionary Revisions**
We agree that the paper concerns patients seeking help to change or redirect their homosexual feelings/behaviour and thus have changed the title to reflect this more accurately.

**Reviewer Jack Drescher**

We have added a discussion point on why therapists might have undertaken such therapies (page 18).

**Other changes**

We have added a section on competing interests (page 22) and noted the ethics approval (page 5).