Author's response to reviews

Title: Developing Community-based Preventive Interventions in Hong Kong: A Description of the First Phase of the Family Project

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January 16, 2012

RE: 1808541085529703 - Developing Community-based Preventive Interventions in Hong Kong: A Description of the First Phase of the Family Project

Dear Dr Thomson,

Thank you for your review. Please see our revision. Point-by-point changes in response are described below. Each of your comments is followed by our response as noted.

Editor: There still seems to be confusion between the terms used to describe development of the intervention and evaluation. See page 4- "challenges of designing locally relevant interventions using the best design...". This paper is about challenges of developing a culturally appropriate intervention. The issue of using RCTs or other study designs to evaluate the resulting intervention is not relevant and not a key part of this paper. It is important that design of the intervention and design of subsequent evaluation is not confused in the text.

Response: We have now removed references to study design, specifically RCT, from the Introduction.

Editor: See also in the first line of the methods section (page 6) "that the studies should"- what do the authors mean by this? What studies? Do they really mean the interventions being developed?

Response: We do indeed mean the interventions being developed. We have now changed the sentence (end of page 4) to specifically so state: “Guidelines provided by the granting agency for the studies to be developed were…”

Editor: The paper could be further improved by the use of sub-headings in the methods section to indicate the purpose of each paragraph.
Response: We have now provided the following subheadings: Models guiding intervention development (page 5); The academic/community collaborative team (page 6); Selection of targeted participants (page 6); and Strategies used to identify sources of parent-child stress (page 7). Reorganization by headings also made it clearer which sections should be eliminated and which should be moved (further explained below).

Editor: There still seems to be unnecessary text in the methods section which doesn’t seem to fit- particularly the much of the second paragraph on page 7.

Response: We have reduced the information in the paragraph mentioned which now appears on pages 6-7, eliminating information not relevant to the public health significance that guided the selection of parent-child relationships as the target of our interventions.

Editor: It seems to me know that the methods should outline the approach used not to the intervention but to how the authors prioritised and selected groups and topics- namely sources of parent-child stress in chinese culture, then describe (as they do) their methods for the empirical investigation of this.

Response: We hope that the reorganization accomplishes this end. We also moved one paragraph that preceded the process of development of the interventions into the Background section. This paragraph which describes the granting agencies’ guidelines now appears on pages 4-5.

Editor: The methods would benefit from some description (brief) of how the empirical data were managed and analysed, i.e. beyond simply "reviewed by the research team", this need only require another few sentences.

Response: We have now added the following sentences (page 7): “Themes were extracted and organized into the format that follows in the results. Data were integrated from the two discussion groups as well as the surveys, with the goal of coming to a consensus about the behaviors that were to be targeted when developing the interventions.”

Editor: There should also be a statement of ethical approval for data collection from human participants.

Response: We have now included the following sentence (page 7): “All data collection from participants was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Hong Kong.”

Editor: In the results section it would be useful to clarify from where the themes emerged and also to use a sub-heading to indicate the purpose and content of the first section (ie before intervention design).

Response: We have now provided a sub-heading (page 8): “Themes extracted relevant to the intervention targets”, which follows from the previous statement about management of the empirical data from the groups. The first sentence following the sub-heading clarifies from where the themes emerged: “The
following themes emerged from the discussion groups and surveys with the Hong Kong population and guided the selection of intervention targets…”

Editor: The abstract and text in the different sections does not reflect the content of corresponding sections in the paper and needs to be amended.

Response: The abstract has now been revised.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Sunita M. Stewart