Author's response to reviews

Title: Perspectives of pupils, parents, and teachers on mental health problems among Vietnamese secondary school pupils

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Version: 4 Date: 5 September 2013

Author's response to reviews: see over
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MS: 1590285631904145

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Version: 2 Date: 03 July 2013

Author’s response to reviews: see over
Reviewer's report

Title: Perspectives of pupils, parents, and teachers on mental health problems among Vietnamese secondary school pupils

Version: 3 Date: 9 July 2013

Reviewer: Marit By Rise

Reviewer's report:

Review is uploaded in separate document.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.

We thank the reviewer for taking time to consider our work and for your critical suggestions and comments, which indeed helped us to improve our manuscript. We would like to explain how we have addressed the reviewers’ concerns as follows.

Major changes:

1. Description of data analysis method is unclear / lacking

There are several unclear aspects in the qualitative method description, although the data collection process is much better described in the revised version of the manuscript. I am especially concerned about the description of the data analysis process.

In the abstract, methods section, it is stated that “data was analyzed using the process of indexing to bring together all extracts of data.”

Similarly, the authors write in the Methods section under Data analysis:

“The process of indexing was applied to bring together all extracts of data that were pertinent to the particular theme. In this approach, the analyst reads and re-reads the text and assigns
index codes related to the content of the data and of interest to the researcher’s analytic framework [16].”

Reference no. 16 is about focus group interviews, but it is still unclear how the interview data as a whole (individually and in focus groups) was analyzed and which analytic framework was used to do this work. It is not apparent to this reviewer what “the process of indexing” is as a method to analyze qualitative data. This has to be clearer in the methods section of the manuscript.

Thank you very much for the comments about the data analysis. Indeed, our analysis method is not the process of indexing. We clarified the analysis process in the abstract and method sections as follow:

In the abstract, methods section, we replace “data was analyzed using the process of indexing to bring together all extracts of data.” by: All interviews and FGDs were audio-taped, transcribed and analyzed for the identification of emerging issues using qualitative techniques of progressive coding, analytic memoing and ongoing comparison. (line 31-33)

Similarly, in the methodology, data analysis section, the description of the analysis process was changed as followed, in line 132-140:

Each interview and FGD was transcribed verbatim, and then translated from Vietnamese into English word by word. The translation was double checked by the researcher and a Dutch professor who can understand Vietnamese language and Vietnamese culture because of her long time working in Vietnam. All interviews were analyzed for the identification of emerging issues using qualitative techniques of progressive coding, analytic memoing and ongoing comparison. Data collection and analysis proceeded simultaneously to allow new information to be investigated in subsequent interviews. Emerging themes informed the ethical analysis, suggested new issues for investigation and assisted in identification of conceptual relationships.
Firstly, key passages in the transcripts were highlighted. ...

2. The use of concept mapping is unclear

The authors describe under Methodology, Participants and methods - that concept mapping was used to conduct the focus group discussions. “For the FGDs, a structured group process was used, based on concept mapping (Trochim, 1989) which describes both concepts and integration of conceptual relationships [14, 15].”

It is not clear how this group process was conducted and which parts of the concept mapping process that were included. Concept mapping (according to Trochim’s and other authors’ description) is a complex and comprehensive method to make a conceptual framework, but it does not appear to be used analytically throughout this study. Please make this clearer and help the reader understand how this is used in this study.

We appreciate and totally agree with the reviewer’s comments. Therefore, we decide to leave out “For the FGDs, a structured group process was used, based on concept mapping (Trochim, 1989) which describes both concepts and integration of conceptual relationships [14, 15].”

3. Data from initial interviews with professionals lacking

I cannot find a description on how data from the initial interview with professionals was used. This should be described. Although the total sample includes the psychiatrists and researchers (Participants) it is also stated in the Result section that the results are from the interviews with teachers, parents and pupils. The data from the initial interviews with professionals seems not to be included here. As the manuscript stands now it is not clear how the results from the initial interviews with professionals are used and have contributed to the study’s results.

Many thanks for the suggestion. The data from the initial interviews with professionals helped
to develop the guidelines and to contextualize our findings. We added the following sentence to clarify this. (line 135-140)

All interviews were analyzed for the identification of emerging issues using qualitative techniques of progressive coding, analytic memoing and ongoing comparison. Data collection and analysis proceeded simultaneously to allow new information to be investigated in subsequent interviews. Emerging themes informed the ethical analysis, suggested new issues for investigation and assisted in the identification of conceptual relationships.

4. An interview guide or topic list for interviews is lacking.

My impression is that the interviews with professionals were used to plan the subsequent interviews with pupils, teachers, and parents, but this is not described. And if an interview/topic guide was used; How was this developed and changed during the data collection process?

We appreciate the reviewer’s kind comments on the contribution of the interviews with professionals. We agree with the reviewer that the purposes of the interviews with researchers (at the Hanoi School of Public Health), two psychiatrists, and two high school teachers were not explained clearly.

We added two sentences for more explanation from line 87 to 90, under Participants and Methods.

Next, guidelines for in-depth interviews and focus group discussions for students, teachers and parents were developed. The guidelines were semi structured and changed several times, allowing new information to be investigated in subsequent interviews.

5. There are some sections in the Result chapter that are not results and which should be moved to the Discussion section;

Page 13: There have never been laws against homosexual activity in Vietnam.
However, in May, 2002, state-run media declared that homosexuality was a social evil on par with drug use and prostitution and suggested laws to allow the arrest of same sex couples [18]. Although tolerance for homosexuality seems to be increasing nowadays, these pupils’ stories suggest that intolerance still causes serious problems for young people.

Page 14: Fighting among students is apparently a rapidly increasing phenomenon in Vietnamese society [19]. This might be a result of poor mental health, academic pressure and mutual competition.

We appreciate the reviewer’s comments and the reviewer’s advise to move these phrases to the discussion section.

We agree that this is not results. We have also checked and found that the ideas related to these were mentioned in the discussion. Therefore, we decided to move out these sections.

6. In my opinion the Result section is too long and should be more condensed.

However, I will leave it to the Editor to choose whether the length of the manuscript is appropriate for the journal.

The fact that not much is known about this topic in Vietnam, and the involvement of many stakeholders (students, parents and teachers) it is hard to condense the result section without losing relevant data. But if the editor decides that it is necessary we will try.

Minor changes:

In the Methods section under Methodological Approach the manuscript says: “Explorative qualitative approach.” Since different forms of interviews were used it would be more appropriate to call this “an exploratory qualitative approach including individual and focus group interviews”.

Thanks for pointing out this and suggestion. We have edited the Methods section under Methodological Approach as your suggestion, “an exploratory qualitative approach including individual interviews and focus group discussions”, line 76-77.
Reviewer's report

**Title**: Perspectives of pupils, parents, and teachers on mental health problems among Vietnamese secondary school pupils

**Version**: 3  **Date**: 22 July 2013

**Reviewer**: Ana Soledade Graeff-Martins

**Reviewer's report**: The authors made all the reviews suggested and the paper can be accepted for publication.

**Level of interest**: An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English**: Acceptable

**Statistical review**: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests**: I declare that I have no competing interests.

*We thank the reviewer for taking time to consider our work and for your approval for publication.*