Author's response to reviews

Title: Indigenous perspectives on active living in remote Australia: a qualitative exploration of the socio-cultural link between health, the environment and economics

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Version: 2 Date: 8 March 2013

Author's response to reviews: see over
Cover Letter: description of the changes made

Reviewer's report 1
Reviewer: Justin Richards

Thank you for your comments. Please see below the authors’ responses.

Major Compulsory Revisions

- The "Background" section contains important information that directs the reader towards the research objectives. However, it is verbose and I think it could benefit from a more streamlined approach that focuses on the problem addressed in the target population and a more organised structure that clearly outlines:

1) The problem (i.e. what we know about remote Indigenous health and PA);
2) What we don't know (i.e. cultural specificity of Indigenous health interventions);
3) What this study adds (i.e. study objective, hypothesis).

We have edited and reduced the number of words in the 'Background' section. It begins with stating the problem in an international context which includes: the problem of chronic disease due to sedentarism but also the problem of a lack of solutions as to how physical activity can be successfully reintegrated into modern lifestyles and environments. It then states the problem specific to a remote Indigenous Australian and Northern Territory context with regard to both aspects of the problem. It goes on to describe what we do know about the direction physical activity health promotion in remote Indigenous communities needs to take i.e. that cultural meanings and links to physical activity are important; but that what we do not know is how to make these links. It then states that this study aimed to provide Indigenous perspectives on what these links are between remote Indigenous culture and physical activity.

- The "Methods" section does not provide sufficient information to replicate the study and is poorly organised. I would encourage the authors to review other similar papers in the target journal and consider them as structural and content templates. The methods would certainly benefit from including the following (or similar) subtitles to improve its structure:

1) Study design
2) Participants (include details of how communities and individuals were selected)
3) Data Collection Procedures
4) Data analysis
5) Ethical approval

The ‘Methods’ section has been restructured and now includes the following subheadings: Study design, Study population and study sites, Data collection and analysis and Ethical approval. More detail has been provided in the ‘Ethical approval’ section in line with the BMC RATS guidelines for reporting the qualitative aspect of the study.
- The first section of the "Findings" section should actually be included as part of the study Methods. It is also important to define the age groups that you considered (i.e. explain what is meant by "26-46+" - is this two age groups combined?).

Statements from the ‘Findings’ section that are better suited to the ‘Methods’ section have been included there. The ‘Findings’ section has been renamed ‘Results’. The demographics of the sample sought are explained in better detail in the ‘Methods’ and the demographics of the actual sample that emerged during the field work is explained in the ‘Results’ sections (this is in line with other published BMC qualitative articles and the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors general principles regarding documentation of methods in journal articles http://www.icmje.org/manuscript_prepare.html ).

- The "Setting the scene: some observations" section provides some important background information on the Indigenous context and health behaviours. I don't feel that much of this information constitutes the novel contribution that the authors are making to the evidence and therefore it should be better referenced and not included in the study "Findings". I recommend that the authors consider how this information may be useful to contextualise the study in the "Background" and/or explain the findings in the "Discussion". Alternatively, if some of this information was directly relevant and observed in the target communities of this study, it could integrated into the thematic "Findings" that are subsequently presented in this section.

The length of the ‘Setting the scene’ section has been cut down from over 2 pages in length to two paragraphs and some information previously included there has been relocated to the ‘Study sites’ section.

- In the "Discussion" section the authors have done a good job at presenting their findings in the context of existing literature. However, they have failed to adequately discuss the limitations of their study and how this may have influenced their findings (e.g. sample bias - females already active, representativeness and size of sample, generalisability to other communities, selective reporting of results from only a few participants etc...). They have also failed to identify areas of need for future research.

A subheading ‘Limitations’ has been added to the section at the end of the ‘Discussion’ that describes the limitations and challenges of the study. Future research needs have been identified at the end of this section just prior to the conclusion.

Minor Essential Revisions

- In the "Background" section, further explanation is needed for the statement "...remote Aboriginal populations, being physically active is possibly even more important in the prevention of chronic disease in this population than it is amongst other". Please develop why might this be a particular problem for remote populations?
This statement and the paragraph that contains it has been explained more clearly and in more detail.

- The "Work and 'walkabout'..." section is well written and presented. However there is one point where the authors use the phrase "Consistent with the literature...", but fail to provide references for the statement.

References have been provided to support this statement.

- At the end of the "Discussion" section the authors refer to a "rich contribution made by the paintings of physical activity". However, the paintings are not specifically referred to in the "Findings" or the "Discussion" prior to this statement. It would be helpful if the authors described this "rich contribution" earlier in the manuscript so that the reader understands how this contributed to the conclusions drawn.

Descriptions and interpretations of 3 of the paintings have been added to the ‘Results’ section on pages 11, 12 and 18.

- In the "Conclusion" the authors make the statement that "public health advocates are turning to Indigenous models...". I don't agree that this is a major conclusion from the study. Based on the study findings, perhaps it would be more appropriate to say that "public health advocates need to recognise Indigenous models..."

The suggested change to the wording of this statement has been made.

- Please check that the reference formatting is consistent throughout the document and is compliant with the journal regulations.

The referencing has been checked and complies with the BMC referencing style. Some titles have been made bold and a typographical error of the word ‘promote’ in reference 37 has been corrected.

- Please ensure that there is consistency in the use of the terms Indigenous and Aboriginal throughout the document. At times it appears that these are used interchangeably, but it may be better to be consistent with the use of Indigenous throughout. Also check that capitalisation is consistent throughout.

In Australia Indigenous refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as a group. Indigenous people from the mainland are thus often described as Aboriginal as distinct from Torres Strait Islanders. This is why both terms were previously used. For the sake of clarity and consistency for an international audience however we have replaced all the terms ‘Aboriginal’ with ‘Indigenous’ as the distinction between Torres Strait Islanders is not necessary within this study. This includes the title of the article.

- The authors should consider softening some of the assertions that are made in the paper. Although this paper makes an important contribution to understanding how Indigenous PA interventions could be improved, it is important to recognise
that, given its limitations, it is not possible to make strong causal statements based on the outcomes of this work (e.g. end of first sentence of the discussion: "...is an appropriate health promotion strategy to encourage physical activity" could be changed to "...may be an appropriate health promotion strategy to encourage physical activity".

The suggested change to the wording of this statement has been made.

Discretionary Revisions

- There are several very long sentences in the text, which may confuse the reader. I would encourage the authors to shorten these and/or divide them into two sentences to improve ease of reading.

Where possible, the long sentences have been reduced or divided accordingly.

- Although the authors have discussed the findings well in the context of other Indigenous literature, they may want to consider the broader evidence base that is growing around physical activity and "social capital".

This concept has not been included in the revised article as it did not feature heavily in the literature review at the time of the study.

- Although this is not the focus of your argument in the background section, it might be pertinent to note that PA recommendations have now shifted to 150 minutes/week rather than 30 mins/day.

The reference to 30 mins per day has remained as this was the recommendation at the time of the study as discussed with participants.
Reviewer's report 2
Reviewer: Darrel Manitowabi

Thank you for your comments. Please see below the authors’ responses.

Discretionary Revisions:

1) On the top of page 5, the term “post-colonial” is referenced without situating its problematic as expressed in the literature on colonialism and Indigenous peoples. This article clearly reveals a creeping colonialism at work that is challenging, refuting and ultimately assimilating Indigenous modes of physical activity and livelihood. Thus, “post-colonial” is out-of-place and its use needs to be clarified.

The term ‘post-colonial’ has been replaced with ‘colonised’ to reflect the Indigenous perspective that colonisation continues to the present day.

2) The authors invoke Bourdieu’s habitus to explain Indigenous and non-Indigenous incongruities with physical activity, the environment and work. This theoretical engagement is compatible with the research findings. However, a secondary source is referenced and Bourdieu’s original (1977) work is not. I recommend the authors either reference some of his work (original or subsequent works), or better situate its exclusion by emphasizing its re-articulation in the secondary source.

The original Bourdieu (1977) work has now been referenced.

3) My final discretionary revision relates to two alternative theoretical contributions this research makes and the authors may wish to explore. The first relates to Mary-Ellen Kelm’s (1999) work on colonizing bodies. Her work focused on how government policies transformed Indigenous bodies by removing, relocating and banning Indigenous healing traditions. I see similarities with this research and Kelm’s. Though dominant non-Indigenous Australian health promotion initiatives are not framed explicitly in this same way, the objective is the same: impose a Eurocentric logic on Indigenous peoples.

Although Mary-Ellen Kelm’s (1999) work is clearly relevant and will be picked up in any future studies by the authors on this topic, it has not been included in the revision of this article.

4) A second theoretical alternative the authors may consider is engaging with Tim Ingold’s work on Indigenous perceptions of the environment (2000) and human movement and knowledge (2011). Ingold’s insights reveal how and why Indigenous peoples experience the environment in the ways they do and he demonstrates a science of culture and a culture of science. These are similar themes the authors are engaging.

Again, although Tim Ingold’s (2011) work is clearly relevant and will be picked up in any future studies by the authors on this topic, it has not been included in the revision of this article.
EDITOR'S COMMENTS:

1. Copyediting:
After reading through your manuscript, we feel that the quality of written English needs to be improved before the manuscript can be considered further.

We advise you to seek the assistance of a fluent English speaking colleague, or to have a professional editing service correct your language. Please ensure that particular attention is paid to the abstract.

The entire article has been revised and the grammar improved. The abstract in particular has been refined. The article contains local Indigenous language terms and excerpts from interviews with Indigenous participants for whom English is not their first language. The use of local Indigenous language terms and deviations from standard English have been explained or clarified in parenthesis throughout the article and within the quotations.

2. Please adhere to RATS guidelines (http://www.biomedcentral.com/authors/rats) for reporting the qualitative aspect of the study.

The BMC reporting guidelines for qualitative studies have been adhered to. More detail has been provided in the 'Ethical approval' section in line with the BMC RATS guidelines for reporting the qualitative aspect of the study.

3. The list of authors in the manuscript should be written exactly as they are in the submission system, both in style and order. The preferred style is 'First name Initial Last name' (e.g. Joe F Bloggs).

Authors are now listed in the manuscript by 'First name Initial Last name'.

4. Please re-name the title 'Findings' to 'Methods'.

The Findings and Methods sections have been restructured and clarified according to the reporting guidelines for qualitative studies. The ‘Findings’ section has been renamed ‘Results’.

5. Competing interests:
Manuscripts should include a ?Competing interests? section. This should be placed after the Conclusions/Abbreviations. Please consider the following questions and include a declaration of competing interests in your manuscript:

Financial competing interests? In the past five years have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future? Is such an organization financing this manuscript (including the article-processing charge)? If so, please specify.

? Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organization that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future? If so, please specify.

? Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents
relating to the content of the manuscript? Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript? If so, please specify. ? Do you have any other financial competing interests? If so, please specify. Non-financial competing interests? Are there any non-financial competing interests (political, personal, religious, ideological, academic, intellectual, commercial or any other) to declare in relation to this manuscript? If so, please specify.

This section has been added to the manuscript and these questions considered.

6. Authors' information: Please include an Authors' Contributions section after Competing interests. Please check the instructions for authors on the journal website for the correct format to use for Authors' Contributions.

The ‘Authors’ details' section has been added at the end of the manuscript.