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

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

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 29 March 2013

**Reviewer:** Justin Richards

**Reviewer’s report:**

Major Compulsory Revisions

1) Limitations, Paragraph 1

The authors have done well to identify several limitations of the study methods. However, they have not explicitly addressed some key limitations that may have influenced the findings (e.g. sample bias - females already active, failure to recruit local researchers (Yapa), conducting interviews in 3rd or 4th language etc...). Most importantly, the authors have also failed to describe how the limitations that they have described may influence the study findings. It is important that obvious limitations and their implications on the results are described.

The limitations of failing to recruit co-researchers, male participants and less active females in the desert community have been addressed in more detail. The following information has been added to the ‘Limitations’ section:

“The inability to recruit community-based researchers and more participants in the desert community was attributed to a period of intra-community conflict that had preceded the field work and resulted in a significant proportion of the community moving away temporarily. This included 3 people who had initially expressed a strong interest in the research positions moving away from the community during the field work period. This meant that we were not able to document male perspectives or those of less active females in the desert community. However, despite the resulting differences in recruitment methods, participant numbers and the gender imbalance between the groups, many views and experiences described by participants in relation to physical activity were similar within and across the two communities. The men and women, the active and the inactive all described a distinct preference for traditional physical activities in ‘the bush’. The strengths of this study were: the involvement of local co-researchers where possible; the conduct of some interviews in first language; the ability of the co-researchers to translate the local language into English where needed; and the rich contribution made by the paintings of physical activity.”
Minor Essential Revisions

1) Study population and study sites, paragraph 1

The authors refer to "a number of remote NT communities". If the authors know how many communities were consulted it should be reported here (even if it is explicitly stated as an approximation).

The number of communities that were sent emails seeking expressions of interest about the research project and the number of communities that responded has been included:

‘There are approximately 82 remote communities in the NT. These are spread out over an area of approximately 1,400,000 square kilometres. In the late 2000s these communities were grouped into 8 regional shires. An email seeking expressions of interest about participating in the research project was initially sent to all NT regional shire managers, all community clinics and as many community council offices and organisations as possible.’

2) Study population and study sites, paragraph 1

What is meant by "the communities expressed a need for the study"? Was it the communities that "expressed" a need? If so, how? Or was it the researchers who assessed that there was a need? This needs to be clarified.

The representatives from the communities and how they expressed a need for and support for the project have now been clarified:

‘Representatives from approximately 7 communities responded and were followed up with phone calls or visits to ascertain the level of interest. During a period of closer consultation with two of the remote community areas the people expressed concern about chronic disease and physical inactivity in their community and saw the research project as an opportunity to improve the situation. An agreement to participate in the project was established and support letters were signed by representatives of the community councils, organisations and traditional owners.’

3) Study population and study sites, paragraph 1

The failure to recruit Yapa co-researchers is important and may have implications on the study findings (see comment on "limitations" above). It would be helpful for the reader to know why the recruitment was unsuccessful - this may be an important finding in itself.

The reason for the failure to recruit Yapa co-researchers has been included in this section and further details about this are now supplied in the ‘Limitations’ section. The following information has been added:
‘This was mainly due to intra-community conflict and unrest and the subsequent temporary departure of many people from the community preceding and during the field work period. Yapa and non-Indigenous service providers assisted with recruitment and facilitation of interviews in this community.’

4) Data Collection and Analysis, Paragraph 1

The authors should state more clearly what they were looking for in the "purposive" recruitment and how this was implemented.

The purposive recruitment and implementation has been described more clearly:

‘Purposive and opportunistic methods were used to recruit participants over a five month period with the aim of interviewing at least 30 community members or until data saturation. We sought a balance of genders and a range of ages over 16 in our study group. Available male and female community members and co-researchers over the age of 16 were invited in person by the researchers or service providers to be interviewed.’

5) Data Collection and Analysis, Paragraph 2

A description of what the first author observed and recorded is necessary. Were these observations of the interviews? Of the paintings? Of the communities? Of physical activity? This needs to be clarified.

More detail about the journal observations has been included:

‘Observations of community infrastructure, physical activity and social and cultural events were recorded in a journal by the first author.’

6) Data Collection and Analysis, Paragraph 3

When and how were "the interpretation and findings... confirmed by the co-researchers and participants as accurate, relevant and meaningful"? This needs to be clarified.

More accurate detail about how the confirmation of the interpretation and findings was established is now included:

‘The interpretation and findings were compiled into a booklet and poster using quotes and images of the themes. These visual mediums were used by the co-researchers and available participants to read over, reflect upon and communicate with the first researcher about the results. In this way the thematic interpretation of the data was discussed and then confirmed as representative of the views of those involved in the study.’
7) Results, Paragraph 1

What does "m=9" mean? This needs to be clarified.

(n = 17, m = 9, f = 8) has now been replaced with (number =17, male=9, female =8).

8) All headings

The authors should be consistent in the capitalization used in all headings / sub-headings

Only the first letter of the headings and sub-headings are now capitalised.

9) References in text

There are several references in the text that do not have a close ")." This should be corrected before publication.

The close brackets on the three references on page 21 and 22 have now been included.

Discretionary Revisions

1) Background, Paragraph 2

The authors use the acronym NT for the first time in the main text (i.e. not in the abstract). I recommend that the authors consider articulating Northern Territory (NT) at this point in the text.

NT has been changed to ‘Northern Territory (NT)’ at the first mention in the main text.

2) Setting the scene: some observations, Paragraph 1

The authors use the word "even" 3 times in the first two sentences. This reads a little "clunky" and may benefit from being rephrased.

The second use of the word ‘even’ has been replaced with ‘despite the’.

3) Discussion, Paragraph 1

The first sentence of the discussion is very long and the reader is easily lost. I recommend breaking this in to two or three sentences to ensure your point is clear and easy to digest.

This sentence has been separated into two clearer sentences:
‘The meaning of work, space and place in relation to physical activity, as expressed by the participants in this study, suggests that supporting various forms of natural and cultural resource management may be an appropriate physical activity health promotion strategy. It is important that these land management and related employment opportunities involve access to and physical engagement with ‘the bush’ and traditional country.’

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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