Author's response to reviews

Title: Tobacco smoking, associated risk behaviours, and experience with quitting: a qualitative study with homeless smokers addicted to drugs and alcohol

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Version: 3 Date: 6 August 2013

Author's response to reviews:

Dear editor(s),

We thank the reviewers for the positive and constructive feedback on our manuscript and submit a revised version, addressing all comments made. We hope that you will consider this paper for publication and are looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Responses to reviewers’ comments

We would like to thank the reviewers for their constructive and helpful comments and have listed our changes to address the issues raised below.

Reviewer 1:

We thank reviewer 1 very much for the positive comments on our paper.

The statement in the Discussion section that “certain parameters, such as knowledge, motivation/confidence to quit, and previous engagement in efforts to give up smoking, and concurrent substance abuse were high compared to the general homeless population, whereas the latter is known to be very high among homeless people [19]” is confusing in the light of further statement of authors (in the “Lack of acknowledgement of health risks” section in the Discussion) that: “Findings that participants appeared to know little about the health risks of smoking contrasted results from another study, according to which homeless smokers had high levels of knowledge about the risks of smoking [7]…..”.

The authors should clarify this issue.

We have clarified these statements, as suggested, in the relevant sections of the manuscript. The ‘certain parameters’ we referred to in the first sentence, should indeed not have included ‘knowledge’.

Reviewer 2:
Major Compulsory Revisions
1. Comments on the Table
You explained Table 1 and 2. But, those tables didn’t be attached in this paper. Please attach Table 1 and 2.

We apologise for any omission, but were under the impression that we had submitted a separate document including table 1 and 2, as per instructions for authors provided by the journal. We have re-attached the file.

2. Comments on the Methods
In the Data analysis, you explained that this data were analyzed by two researchers. Were both of two researchers harm reduction service providers as specialist nurses? It was a little hard to understand. You should explain your characteristics, such as your occupation.

We have added information (occupation of the second researcher) to the relevant section in the manuscript section, as suggested.

In data analysis, how was division of roles performed between two researchers? Did two researchers analyze the data independently or jointly? You should explain the process of data analysis between two researchers.

We have added information (supporting role of the co-researcher) to the relevant sections (methods section and authors' contributions at the end), as suggested.

In the third paragraph, you explained that “the following three main themes were identified for coding and are described and illustrated”. But those processes of analysis were not explained. Those processes were important as interpretation of the results. You should explain those processes in more concrete (coding, described and illustrated).

We have added information to the relevant section in the manuscript section, as suggested, and hope that this is now clearer, although we are not quite sure why the reviewer refers to the verbs ‘code, illustrate and describe’ as processes, as the latter two simply refer to the organisation of the subsequent paragraphs in the manuscript. We have reorganised the sentence to avoid confusion.

Minor Essential Revisions
1. Comments on the Background
In the first paragraph, you used abbreviation “NHS”. But the meaning of “NHS” was explained in the Methods (Setting & participants) and the last paragraph in the Results. You should explain meaning of the word at the first.
We have changed this as requested.

Discretionary Revisions
1. Comments on the Results
In the Results, you used four underlines. I did not understand why you used those underlines. Please explain those underlines.

Apologies for the formatting error – we have now removed the lines in question.

2. Comments on the Discussion
In the Study limitation, you explain that “which did not indicate gender differences in the contents of the narrative”. Those results should be explained in the Results.

We have edited the section to clarify this. Nothing indicated that an analysis split by gender would have been useful, and so – in line with good practice - we did not undertake a dedicated qualitative comparison of the two groups. We have therefore removed the last part of the sentence in question, to avoid confusion.

In the Lack of acknowledgement of health risks, you wrote that “Homeless people are well documented to have lower literacy levels than general population, with a third of one of the UK’s largest homeless service’s users having difficulty understanding what the read”. How much percentage of literacy in this study participant? This information helped readers understanding about Results and Discussion.

All of our study participants were literate. We have added this information to the manuscript.