Author's response to reviews

Title: Asthma beliefs among mothers and children from different ethnic origins living in Amsterdam, the Netherlands

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear miss Pafitis,

Thank you very much for the review of our manuscript ‘Asthma beliefs among mothers and children from different ethnic origins living in Amsterdam, the Netherlands’. We are very pleased that you like to consider the revised version for publication.

We are grateful to the reviewer’s comments. Moreover we appreciate the suggestions to improve the written English the reviewer has given. We have addressed the comments in a revised manuscript and marked them in yellow. Below we will give a point-by-point response to the concerns of the reviewer.

**Introduction – paragraph 1**
Inhalation corticosteroids – this may be an international variation, but the British National Formulary refers to inhaled corticosteroids.

*Changed in the text.*

**Box 1**
“Initially their stay was intended to be temporary, but in the 1970s it became clear they would stay longer or even permanently” – what does this add?

*We agree with the reviewer that this sentence does not add any important information and deleted it in the text.*

“Of the Turks….. 84% has only primary education” – should read “have only primary education”. Same problem in next sentence.

*Changed in the text.*

“a relatively high percentage of these migrants are unemployed” – some figures or a reference is needed here.

*We thank the reviewer for pointing at this inaccuracy and provided it with a reference.*

**Material and methods – paragraph 1 (subject and recruitments)**
“an attempt was made to gain a well balanced reflection…..” – do you mean a well balanced representation?

*We are grateful to the reviewer for this suggestion, and changed the text accordingly.*
“mothers” and “parents” are used interchangeably. Although the tables highlight that only mothers and not fathers were involved, it may be worth mentioning this in the methods section. We are grateful to the reviewer for this suggestion, and changed the text accordingly.

Material and methods – paragraph 2 (focus groups)
“The Turkish and Moroccan mothers…….” This sentence implies that the Dutch mothers were not placed in groups with facilitators of the same ethnic background. I’m sure this isn’t the case.
The reviewer is correct, all focus groups were led by facilitators of the same ethnic background.

“Some examples of questions” – there is no need to write “some”. Changed in the text.

“We are grateful to the reviewer for this suggestion, and changed the text accordingly.

“when do you or does your child take his medication?” – this is grammatically clumsy and may imply that the mother is also asthmatic. I would suggest that “when does your child take his medication?” is a clearer question.

“We are grateful to the reviewer for this suggestion, and changed the text accordingly.

“do you think in case of appropriate asthma treatment, the best thing to do is use ICSs daily?” – this is both an awkward sentence grammatically and highlights potential methodological weaknesses in the focus group interviews i.e. having to ask closed questions. You may find that any qualitative reviewers will question your methods here.

“We are aware of the methodological weaknesses asking closed questions in focus groups. However, as we explained in the preceding sentence, due to the fact that both, the mothers and children sometimes found it difficult to engage in conversation, it became necessary to stimulate and guide them using yes or no questions and examples.
Since the sentence is grammatically incorrect, we have changed it in the text.

Analysis
Section 2 – is writing “Kleinman” in brackets necessary?
We agree with the reviewer that this is not necessary and changed it in the text.

With regard to translation of the responses of the mothers: did native speakers read the original transcripts of the focus group interviews or were the translated transcripts retranslated into the native language. This isn’t clear.

“We agree with the reviewer this section is not written clearly. Native speakers (the facilitators) read the original transcripts and translated it to Dutch. Next the translated transcripts were re-evaluated by other experts in the field and by medical students who shared the same ethnic background as the facilitators and the participants. Finally the transcripts were given to the first author (QvD). We changed the text accordingly.

Results – characteristics
“ most of those who declined, stated….” – the comma is unnecessary.
Changed in the text.
Results - aetiology
As a general rule, the results section is made clumsier by the statements introducing the qualitative data such as “a comment frequently given by the mothers that exemplifies this feeling was….” I feel that most of these link statements are unnecessary and many are grammatically awkward.

We are grateful to the reviewer for this suggestion, and deleted all statements introducing the qualitative data.

“However, in spite of the knowledge the children expressed about the aetiology of asthma, the majority of the children were uncertain about the aetiology” – this doesn’t make sense.
We agree with the reviewer and changed the text accordingly.

“One of the most striking similarities among the mothers was that they seemed to know the asthma could be caused by genetics” – it would be better to say that “asthma has a genetic component”.

Changed in the text.

“Fortunately it is not present every day” – the explanation by the author that “it” is “asthma” is unnecessary.
Deleted in the text.

“Another similarity that was brought forward….” I would replace “brought forward” with “highlighted”.

Changed in the text.

Results – prognosis
“….shared the belief that the asthma…..” either “their asthma” or just “asthma” “Because of this idea” – unnecessary
Deleted in the text.

Results – onset of symptoms
“When discussing the onset of symptoms of asthma…….” - writing “which they believed caused their symptoms” is unnecessary.

“which triggers could give symptoms” – “provoke symptoms”

Changed in the text

Results – treatment
“… mothers manage the asthma”

It is not clear to us what the reviewer meant by this comment.

Results – avoiding triggers
“In particular, avoiding some triggers” – “the avoidance of some triggers”

Changed in the text.

Results – medication
“The state of asthma of their children” – “their childrens’ asthma”

Changed in the text.
“Some of the children were taken off their ICSs…” – this is not clear that it is the mothers rather than the doctors who stop the ICSs.
We agree with the reviewer this is not written clearly and changed the text accordingly.

“Another reason behind…..” it is important to clarify here which mothers you are talking about, else stating that “the Turkish mothers also….” doesn’t make sense.
We agree with the reviewer this is also not written clearly and changed the text accordingly.

“In addition to mentioning side effects…..” – this whole section on alternative therapies needs rewording as it is clumsy.
We agree with the reviewer and changed the text with help of a native speaker.

“Most striking…..” – “It is striking that compared with all of the other mothers..” Changed in the text.

“Also among adolescents, we observed…..” – “We also observed reservations towards medication amongst the adolescents”.
Changed in the text.

“were not reluctant towards their ICSs” – needs rewording.
We agree with the reviewer and changed the text with help of a native speaker.

“The majority of the children expressed…..” – in this sentence the past tense (told) is mixed with the present tense (taking). Either will do, as long is this is consistent.
Changed in the text.

Discussion – para 1
“The idea of never outgrowing asthma…..” – needs rewording.
We agree with the reviewer and changed the text with help of a native speaker.

Discussion - para 3
“All mothers,” – unnecessary comma.
Deleted in the text.

“In particular, the Dutch mothers were the most concerned about this” – either “the Dutch mothers were particularly concerned about this” or “The Dutch mothers were the most concerned about this”.
We are grateful to the reviewer for this suggestion, and changed the text accordingly.

“Conducting long term follow up research…..” – MAY provide interesting results.
We are grateful to the reviewer for this suggestion, and changed the text accordingly.

“the harassments at a young age…..” – needs rewording.
We agree with the reviewer and changed the text with help of a native speaker.

Discussion - para 4
“Treatment is the topic…” – “The topic that highlighted the most significant ethnic differences was treatment.”
We are grateful to the reviewer for this suggestion, and changed the text accordingly.

“The results could be an inadequate patient-clinician communication……” – consider rewording this sentence.
We agree with the reviewer and changed the text with help of a native speaker.

“This brings us carefully…” – why carefully?
We agree with the reviewer that the word carefully is not necessary. Therefore we deleted it in the text.

“no symptoms, no asthma belief” – no need for italics on “belief”
Changed in the text.

Discussion – para 6
Why was the number of participants in the study limited?
We thank the reviewer for this comment. The word limited was in this case not correct. We meant the number of participants was small. We have changed it in the text.

Authors’ contribution
“QMvD have” should read “has”.
Changed in the text.

We hope you will consider this time our manuscript for publication.

On behalf of all co-authors,
Yours sincerely,

Quirine van Dellen