Author’s response to reviews

Title: Mental health literacy as a function of remoteness of residence: an Australian national study

Authors:

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
Dear Dr Norton,

Re: MS: 1752461557215926. Mental health literacy as a function of remoteness of residence: an Australian national study. Kathleen M Griffiths, Helen Christensen and Anthony F Jorm

Thank you for accepting in principal the above manuscript. We have considered the comments of reviewer 2 together with the comments of the other reviewers.

Reviewer 2 makes three points.

1. Response rate. As already noted in the manuscript the lack of information about response rates in rural/remote compared to metropolitan areas is a limitation. The manuscript also notes that the respondents were approached to participate in a health survey not a mental health survey so that survey refusal was not directly linked to the mental health content of the survey. Contrary to the referee’s comment, we believe that it is useful to indicate that the limitation applies to other studies as it provides context for interpreting and synthesising the current study in the context of the previous literature.

2. The large number of tables. The reviewer considers that the number of tables should be further reduced because there were ‘few significant findings’. In the current case, null findings are very important. The prevailing view, at least in Australia, has been that mental health literacy among rural residents is poor and this assumption has informed high profile health promotion efforts. The Tables in this paper enable readers to view the evidence for a contrary view. In this case, tables are just as important for null as significant findings.

3. Educational background. The reviewer indicates that the consequences of using two broad categories for education should be added to the paper. A statement has now been added to the limitations section noting that: The results may have been different had finer gradations of educational level been employed. (We do not consider that a stronger statement is warranted as educational level measurements would not have changed the findings for the uncontrolled analyses and the latter are of practical significance in the current case and similarly (ii) there is no a priori reason to expect that finer gradation of educational level would have yielded more statistically significant differences in the analyses which controlled for education.)

Yours sincerely,

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