Author’s response to reviews

Title: Minimising Barriers to Dental Care in Older People

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for considering this paper for publication and the positive responses of reviewers. We have responded to each of the helpful comments of reviewer 2 as outlined below. The comments are outlined in the text and the responses to each item are presented in bullet points thereafter. In addition, we have addressed typos and made minor revision to shorten and improve the flow of the paper.

We trust that you will consider this revised version acceptable for publication and look forward to your response

yours faithfully

JE Gallagher
E Borreani
S Scambler
D Wright

General

The authors should separate the results and discussion sections into `Results` and `Discussion`.

we have considered the reviewers comments and separated the results and discussion sections. In doing so we have endeavoured to shorten and streamline the paper

It might be of value to include a separate section on `Recommendations to reduce barriers to dental care`.

recommendations are included within the discussion.

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Major Compulsory Revisions

Abstract:
The authors should mention that they used a purposive sampling technique and state the 3 boroughs of South London where they recruited the sample. This will make the inclusion of the boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham more understandable to the reader in the introduction.

- the methods paragraph of the abstract has been updated to address these comments.
- it now states that a purposive sampling technique was used and makes reference to the three boroughs in which the study was conducted.

Introduction and aim:
1. In the section of uptake of services the authors need to clarify whether they are referring to the whole of the UK or just England and Wales?
- the reference to national data refers to England only and this has been clarified in the text.

2. In the section on the aim of the study the authors mention that `Two of the 4 main objectives are presented in this paper¿ ¿ what were the other 2 objectives and where will they be reported?
- two other objectives are being reported separately and the text has been revised to include this explanation and a brief description of the objectives.

Methods:
1. The authors state approximately ¿ exactly how many centres and groups did they visit?
- we have updated the paper to make it clear that 90 centres were contacted, 11 centres were visited and 10 centres were used in the study.

2. Did they assess the respondents¿ degree of cognitive functioning? If so could they provide information on this process?
- The cognitive functioning of volunteers study was considered before they were selected for inclusion and were there were concerns the text by Katzman et al., 1983 was used. Only one individual was excluded following this test and consultation with the centre manager. The method section has been amended to clarify this point.

3. When did they decide to stop gathering the qualitative data ¿ with saturation of the categories? The authors need to state why and when they decided to bring the interviews to a close.
- Data collection continued until there was saturation of the categories whilst ensuring that there was coverage of minority ethnic groups. The interviews/focus groups ended when all of the topics had been covered and the participants had finished discussing their views on each topic.
4. More information should be provided on the Framework Methodology as this could be of value to those wishing to use this methodology in the analysis of qualitative data:
   ๏ further explanation of the approach is provided in an additional paragraph at the end of the methods section.

5. A table providing the demographic profile should be included.
   ๏ this table is included as Table 1.

Results and discussion:
1. This is a long section and it may be worth the authors thinking of reducing the number of quotes.
   ๏ the number of quotes has been reduced as far as possible

2. I would be interested to see how the main concerns of the sample population were used in the section to inform accessible dental care for this priority group.
   ๏ this section is developed in the results and discussion

3. Some examples of how the respondents¿ main concerns to access dental care were informative of the recommendations would be helpful for those working in this area of special care dentistry.
   ๏ the implications for special care dentistry are discussed in the `system¿ section of the discussion

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

I was unable to access Appendix 1 and so could not comment upon it
  ๏ The reference to Appendix 1 was irrelevant and has been removed.