Author's response to reviews

Title: Hope against hope: Exploring the hopes and challenges of rural female caregivers of persons with advanced cancer

Authors:

Allison M Williams (awill@mcmaster.ca)
Wendy Duggleby (wendy.duggleby@ualberta.ca)
Jeanette Eby (ebyj@mcmaster.ca)
Dan Cooper (dan.cooper@rqhealth.ca)
Lars K Hallstrom (lars.hallstrom@ualberta.ca)
Lorraine Holtslander (lorraine.holtslander@usask.ca)
Roanne Thomas (roanne.thomas@uottawa.ca)

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Author's response to reviews:

Re: MS: 7822587879536412

Hope against hope: Exploring the hopes and challenges of rural female caregivers of persons with advanced cancer

Dear Editor,

Thank you for sending us the reviewers’ comments. We have made editorial changes as suggested and have used track changes to highlight them in the revised manuscript. An itemized list below addresses the comments:

Referee #1:

I would suggest going through the document with a careful reading one more time for typos. For instance, offhand I found the following (and I wasn’t specifically looking for them):

Thank-you; this has been done.

Page 4, when mentioning the mixed method study from which these data originated – it states this was a ‘current, explanatory design’ – I think this is a typo, and should read “concurrent explanatory”? This is based on my understanding of Cresswell’s terminology.

Thank-you; change has been made.

pp.11-12: “For each of the narrative categories, with direct quotes from the data from the journals are given” (I think you want to remove ‘with’?).
Thank-you; change has been made.

p.12 “JE began the initial analysis and then meet several times to discuss the analysis...” (also, to clarify, perhaps you mean “and then met with AW and WD several times to discuss the analysis”?

Thank-you; change has been made.

p.14, “anything else but pus inot it”

Thank-you; change has been made.

Final paragraph before the methods section. The sentence “with only three published study of caregivers of persons with advanced cancer, there is a paucity of research in this area.” As well as the typo (change study to studies) I think the sentence should read: “With only three published studies of hope among caregivers of persons with advanced cancer, there is a paucity of research in this area.”

Thank-you; change has been made.

Please state somewhere in the article that your approach to the collection and interpretation of the qualitative data is positivist or objectivist. My understanding of narrative methodology is that it is normally based on a constructivist paradigm (note - the term is not constructiveness, but constructivist or constructionist, or sometimes the term interpretive is used). The clarification that the particular narrative approach used here is objectivist or positivist would help alleviate misunderstandings. As an aside, I still recommend that the authors should consider, albeit in a separate publication (discretionary), a more constructionist analysis of the findings (I concede that to introduce it here would not maintain the existing study integrity in terms of stated purpose.

Thank-you; we believe that the reviewer is possibly defining terms differently than we are. A positivist paradigm is not necessarily objectivist etc. Rather than have this debate in the manuscript which would be confusing to the readers, we have added the following to the study limitations:

“The particular narrative approach utilized in the study was descriptive in nature because of the limitation of the overall study design and data collection method. For example, the data was collected from a mixed method study, where the emphasis was quantitative; thereby the data was collected within a positivist study paradigm. The study design limited the co-construction of knowledge between the participant and researcher and, as such, future research should include an interpretive design with in-depth qualitative interviews.”