Author's response to reviews

Title: Psychological processes that uninformed middle-aged, hospitalized, male Japanese cancer patients experience in resigned to death: in-depth interview study

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Responses to the comments by Reviewer Dr. Christine McPherson

We apply numbers on comments for suggested revisions and lay out our revision on those.

1. The authors make reference to the attitudes of doctors toward informing patients of their disease but do not put this within the context of the prevailing societal norms in Japan regarding self-determination and disclosure of medical information.

   (Page 4, 1. Background: first paragraph)
   Based on your comment we reviewed once again. Then we reached a conclusion as you see in this paragraph.

2. There is scant reference to the psychological literature relating to the reactions of individuals to diagnosis and impending death. There is also a literature on death anxiety, which would fit with the results of the study.

   (Page 5, 1. Background: 4th paragraph)
   As you pointed out, our paper is not sufficiently explained, so we add to the reference and to explain about death anxiety on literature.

3. The authors state the purpose of the study is “to examine the psychological processes of uniformed terminal cancer patients until death” However, the significance of this purpose is not clearly stated.

   (Page 6, 1. Background: 5th paragraph, line 11-14; line 16-19)
   In the revised manuscript, we add to explain about the significance of this purpose.

4. Given the nature of the research participants were not made aware of the actual reason for the study. This brings many ethical issues
regarding the research that are not addressed by the authors. For example, informed consent and how the interviewers dealt with this ethical dilemma within the context of the interview?

(Page 8, 2.2 Data collection method: 1st paragraph, line 22-29)
Following your suggestion, we added an explanation about how the interviewers dealt with this ethical dilemma.

5. The interviewers did not ask questions but listened. How did the interviewers explore issues raised by participants in more detail or clarify their understanding of what participants were saying?

(Page 7, 2.2 Data collection method: 1st paragraph, line 5-10)
Following your suggestions, we try to explain about how we tried to get the information from patient.

6. The authors talk of theoretical sampling but it is not clear whether and how this was carried out.

(Page 8, 2.2 Data collection method: 2nd paragraph, line 1-8)
Additional description such as whether and how this theoretical sampling was carried out.

7. The methodological procedures are not clear and need to be rewritten to improve clarity.

(Page 8, 2.3 Analysis: 1st paragraph, line 1-10)
As you pointed out, we thought our methodological procedures are not clear, so we added and rewritten.

8. The sentence at the end of the third paragraph of this section “Taking correlation.” does not make sense within the context of the analysis.

We are sorry to forgot to delete this sentence.
9. The fourth paragraph in the methods section contains the findings before the reader had reached the Results section. This is Confusing for the reader.

Based on your comment, we reviewed once again, and we delete this section.

10. There needs to be more transparency in the methods section in relation to the interviewers/researchers backgrounds and how this might influence their interpretations.

(Page 7, 2.2 Data Collection method: 1st paragraph, line 1-2)
We added to explain about the background on interviewers and researcher.

11. The finding are presented in a stepwise fashion, where all participants progressed through the stages, experiencing the same emotions at particular times following their hospitalization. If there was variability in the process, this should be of included.

(Page 11, 3. Result: 2nd paragraph, line 1- 5)
We pointed out where all participants progressed through the stages.

12. The authors suggest that as participants went through one gate into another gate the psychological conditions (feelings and behaviours) in the preceding gate came to an end. Yet on reading the data presented participants were clearly demonstrating certain feelings such as anxiety throughout various stages.

(Page 11, 3. Results: 2nd paragraph, line 11-14)
Following the comments, we explained clearly about factor of anxiety.

13. Analyzing the data, the authors make interpretations that are not supported by the data presented. For instance, section 3.2.1 the
comment “We suggest that while they had vague feelings that death might arrive sometime in the near future, they were not clearly conscious of it.” Again, in section 3.5 the authors discuss the finding that the participants no longer talked about death and looked active and lively. The authors state that “Based on this evidence, the interviewer found that patients had come to terms with their own death at this stage”

(Page 17, 3.2.1 Step 1. Death perspectives thinking about the unknown (Talking about death) line 5-6; Page 24-25 3.5 Stage 5: Resigned to their own death line 5-7)
As you pointed out, we changed and added the sentence to explain.

14. The discussion is not based in current theory (as mentioned in the introduction revisions)

(Page 28, 4. Discussion ; 1st paragraph, line 3-21 )
Based on your comment we reviewed once again, and then we reached to conclusion to explain more clearly.

15. What are the implications of the findings?

(Page 31, 4. Discussion: 5th paragraph, line 1-13)
We reviewed again, and then we found some essential approach.

16. In paragraph 4 of this section who are the informed patients that the authors are comparing their uninformed participants with? Also in this paragraph the sentence referring to attitudes to death—the source is not identified.

(Page 30, 4. Discussion:4th paragraph, line 2 and line 11)
As you pointed out, we reviewed again and then we added the reference manuscript.
Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

(Figure 1)

We took a second look, and we corrected the words.

Background

In paragraph 2—the sentence regarding a survey from the Statistics and Information Department (references 9 & 10) is not clear.

(page 35 Reference 11& 12)

As we asked, we can delete the Statistics and Information Dept.

Discussion

The authors suggest that the interviewer might have pushed participants through the stages. This needs to be elaborated.

(Page 31, 4.Discussion 7 paragraph, line 6-7)

We added this sentence.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
The results section is too long and may lose the reader.

We examined closely the result section, but we concluded that we can not reduce the sentence, any more.