Author's response to reviews

Title: Time to decide about risk-reducing mastectomy: A case series of BRCA1/2 gene mutation carriers

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Author's response to reviews:

January 17, 2007

Dr. Lolu da-Silva
Assistant Editor
BMC-series Journals

Re: Manuscript # 4807741001089995, "Time to Decide: Risk-Reducing Mastectomy and BRCA1/2 Gene Mutation Carriers"

Dear Dr. da-Silva,

Thank you very much for your comments and those of the reviewers regarding the above submitted manuscript. For this resubmission, we have restructured the manuscript into a research article of the case series type, and conformed to the format for research submissions, as per your suggestion.

Other specific changes we have made to the manuscript to address the reviewers' comments are outlined below in point form:

Referee #1 (BM)

* Our rationale for the mixed methodology has been added to the beginning of the Methods section.

* Further details about the qualitative data collection and analysis have been provided in the Methods section and we have added that interviews had been transcribed verbatim.

* In the Discussion, we have included a statement clarifying that in this prospective study with longitudinal data collection, we were able to achieve informational redundancy within each case. As well, we have acknowledged that other decision experiences may not be represented by the three cases presented.

* We have indicated in the Methods section that scores on quantitative measures, such as knowledge and decisional conflict, were used to make comparisons within cases over time and were also compared with interview data. In addition, in the Results section, statements about changes in women's individual scores are also supported by qualitative data.

Referee #2 (NH)
* We have added more detail about the women's decision-making experiences throughout the Results section.

* We have clarified that the description of the women's experiences are based on questionnaire responses and responses to open-ended interview questions.

* We have added additional primary data in the Results section about the way in which women described their decision-making experience.

* We have expanded the discussion about women's experiences of health care providers' advice in the context of RM decision making.

* In the discretionary revision section, the reviewer has suggested references related to cultural differences. We have decided not to incorporate this suggested change as this point goes beyond the scope of this study.

Thank you for this opportunity to publish in BMC Women's Health. If you have any additional questions about this manuscript, please contact me at mmccullum@bccancer.bc.ca. We look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Mary McCullum, RN, MSN, CON(C)

Nurse Educator, Hereditary Cancer Program, BC Cancer Agency