Author's response to reviews

Title: Perspectives of Older Adults on Co-Management of Low Back Pain by Doctors of Chiropractic and Family Medicine Physicians: A Focus Group Study

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Author's response to reviews:

August 23, 2013
BMC Complementary and Alternative Medicine
BioMed Central
236 Gray's Inn Road
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Dear Dr. Wardle,

On behalf of my co-authors, I am pleased to submit revisions to our manuscript, “Perspectives of Older Adults on Co-Management of Low Back Pain by Doctors of Chiropractic and Family Medicine Physicians: A Focus Group Study” which is under consideration for publication in BMC Complementary and Alternative Medicine.

We thank both reviewers for their time and thoughtful reviews. We addressed each of their concerns, which made substantial improvements to our manuscript. Point-by-point responses to reviewer comments follow. We also had the manuscript copyedited for its English language usage and re-wrote the abstract to match the presentation style of BMC Complementary and Alternative Medicine.

We look forward to our continued work with the BMC Complementary and Alternative Medicine editorial team on this manuscript.

Sincerely,

Stacie A. Salsbury, PhD RN
Reviewer Comments: Dan Cherkin

Minor Essential Revisions

1) We have made our language more consistent using co-management or collaboration rather than integration in both the abstract and the manuscript, with the exception of reference to an existing theory of integrative medicine that guided the development of our collaborative care model.

2) We added information as to why older adults were our focus in the introduction (lines 80-84), as well as the need for research with working age populations in the discussion (lines 371-374).

3) We added details in the limitations about conducting a study in the city where the first chiropractic college was established and how this limitation might color our findings (lines 358-365).

Discretionary Revisions

Line 95 now Lines 105-6 – We listed how we modified standard focus group techniques in this study.

Line 159 now Lines 208-9 – We did lose some words in that sentence – thanks for noticing! We added details to specify that participants commented on the time their DCs took when talking to them.

Line 262 now Line 310 – Change made as requested.

Lines 299-302 now Line 348 – Clarifications to sentence made.

Line 312 now Lines 351-54 – Rewording regarding pain medications made as suggested.

Tables 3-5 – We are open to including Tables 3-5 as a web appendix, if the editors agree. We hesitate to delete or summarize the tables, as the data tables highlight patterns in the data between different settings (described in the findings). Our colleagues who prefer quantitative styles of data presentation have responded positively to these tables and we wish to make our findings accessible to these readers.

Reviewer Comments: Emma Kirby

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Methods. We added information to the methods regarding our confirmatory techniques (lines 129-131; 144-153). Our goal was not to achieve consensus, but to explore the range of concerns older adults had about MD/DC co-management of LBP.

2. Methods. We added discussion to the methods regarding our selection of focus group methodology for this study (lines 99-106) as well as procedures used
to enhance the data collection environment to enhance the benefits and lessen
the limitations of focus groups (lines 118-129).

Minor Essential Revisions

3. We added description of the similarities and differences of the participant
groups in terms of background or context in the Results section under Participant
and Group Characteristics.

4. Line 104 now Line 115 – Change made as requested. We did not restate our
research aims here as these were discussed in lines 81-87 (now lines 85-91).

5. Lines 146, 189, 193 – We have added a note to the methods section regarding
our use of the terms most/many, some or few (lines 150-153).

6. Line 279 – We have added information about the dynamics of different
co-management approaches to healthcare (lines 306-310).

7. Line 302 – We have clarified this line (now 351-354) at the suggestion of both
reviewers. We hope this revision addresses reviewer comments about the
participants’ concerns regarding pain medications.

Discretionary Revisions

8. Our team discussed whether to present findings with participant identifiers for
quotations, but decided against this approach to provide a clear, uncluttered
presentation. We have anchored the selected quotes with an identifier of the
recruitment setting. We viewed each participant as a wise teacher of his or her
own experiences seeking healthcare for back pain. We wanted the strength of
the participants’ ‘words of wisdom’ as the focus of our findings, so this is what we
chose to foreground in the presentation.