Author’s response to reviews

Title: Understanding of Research: a Sri Lankan Perspective

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Author’s response to reviews:

Understanding of Research: a Sri Lankan Perspective
Reply to reviewer comment 2 on 5 March 2010
Reviewer: Christine Grady
Comments are provided according to the order of comments in the original review report.
1. Authors would like to thank the reviewer.
2. The 1/3 of the participants who did not answer the two questions were not the same and they were random responses. For these questions was done by coding answers given by participants and ‘Don’t know’ was not included as a code, therefore we do not know who said so. This may be a limitation. Authors do not think that this would skew the results or significantly affect the conclusions as ‘participants had a reasonable understanding of research’ is concluded from responses to the whole questionnaire and does not mainly depend on these two questions.
Sample size numbers for table 2 and 3 have been included.
All other questions were answered by all 66 participants.
3. Authors would like to thank the reviewer for pointing this issue out. Themes reflecting benefits have been added to table 6. Also, the first theme on risks is a combination of two themes on drug trials, and these two themes were mistakenly left out. They have been added to the top of quotes under risks.
4. This is how the question was intended. This study included people who are researchers in other fields and who had also been participants in other research. But all were explicitly considered as ‘participants’ for this study, regardless of
their individual situations or past involvements with research.

5. Authors would like to mention that not willing to join drug research or intervention studies and willingness to participate in future research are two separate issues. But, as pointed out by the reviewer about the lack of discussion, we have addressed this in the discussion section. What came out of the data is that although majority of people are willing to take part in future research, some of them would categorically not take part in drug trials or intervention studies.

6. This has been an error and authors would like to acknowledge this. This was how the questionnaire was initially designed but the responses was later changed to ‘Yes’, ‘No’ and ‘Not sure’.

7. The discussion has been modified with the changes done according to reviewer comments. Although the reviewer has recommended deleting the sentence that discusses about public opinion on government involvement in research in Sri Lanka, the authors would prefer its inclusion. We agree that it doesn’t directly follow from the data and also respondents may not have thought about as the first thing. But, respondents have indicated about the lack of knowledge about who mainly carries out research in the country. We want to include this sentence from a Sri Lankan perspective as we would like to carry a message to government agencies about the lack of awareness in the public about the government’s involvement in research, even though bulk of health research in the country is being carried out by various government agencies. This is crucial to our research group’s mission in building a sound overarching research culture in the country. We would like to see improvement in identifying the importance of a research culture in the country and taking this message across to all segments of the society by the government agencies themselves, as main stakeholders in the field of health research.

Understanding of Research: a Sri Lankan Perspective
Reply to reviewer comment 2 on 8 Feb 2010
Reviewer: Michael Parker
Authors comment
The authors would like to thank the reviewer for accepting the answers to the queries raised by the reviewer in the earlier report. Authors would also like to thank the reviewer for pointing out about the typos and would like to state that all identified typos have been corrected.