Author's response to reviews

Title: Risk Communication Formats for Low Probability Events: an exploratory study of patient preferences

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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To the Editor,

Attached is a revised version of our paper “Risk communication formats for low probability events: a study of patient preferences”, MS: 1301310431153297. In making our revisions, we have tried to address the issues identified by the reviewers about the revised manuscript submitted in January 2008. The changes we have made in response to each reviewer are summarized below. We are grateful to all four reviewers for their helpful and insightful comments both this time and in response to the original version of the manuscript. We hope these changes adequately address their concerns.

Reviewer 1, Stacey Sheridan,
1) Major compulsory revisions
   a. It would be helpful to see discussions of research implications.
   We have added two paragraphs to the discussion section on page 10 that discuss differences between our results and those of an earlier study by Dr Sheridan and colleagues, suggest a possible reason why the subjects preferred the combined risk formats more than the single ones, and suggest areas for additional research.

2) Minor essential revisions
   a. The authors repeatedly present information on “cancer screening” preventing cancer deaths. It would be more accurate to present information as “cancer screening and early treatment” leading to prevention of cancer deaths.

   We agree that it is more accurate to refer to cancer screening and early treatment. However, we did not explicitly include this in the study as it was not the primary focus of the project. We also wanted to simplify and focus the subject interaction as much as possible on the graphic presentations. We have added a sentence explaining this assumption to the methods section at the end of the first paragraph under the “study intervention” subheading.

   b. The augmented icon display in figure 2 needs a key to aid interpretation.
   We have added a key to the symbols used. We have also included mention of both screening and screening-related interventions in the explanation to address the previous concern.

Reviewer 3, Jessica Ancker
1. Information about informed consent.
We have added information about the consent procedures to the methods section at the end of the “study population” paragraph.

**Reviewer 4, Joan Austoker**

- no changes requested

**Reviewer 2, Brian Zikmund-Fisher,**

1) Major compulsory revisions
   - none

2. Minor essential revisions
   a. *There’s no need to report a p value smaller than 0.001*

   We have changed the reported p value from < 0.00001 to 0.0001.

3. Discretionary revisions
   a. *Consider adding “exploratory” to the title.*

   In response to this suggestion, we have changed the title of the manuscript from “Risk communication formats for low probability events: a study of patient preferences” to “Risk communication formats for low probability events: an exploratory study of patient preferences”.

   We have added a reference to the attached file on page 7 and made some minor wording changes to improve the clarity of the manuscript. We have also checked the formatting of the manuscript and, as far as we can tell, it meets the Journal’s requirements.

   Please let me know if you need any additional information.

   Sincerely,

   James G. Dolan, MD