Author's response to reviews

Title: Factors influencing nurses' compliance with Standard Precautions in order to avoid occupational exposure to microorganisms: A focus group study.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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To: Editor
   BMC Nursing

Dear Editor,

We are pleased to submit our revised manuscript entitled “Factors influencing nurses’ compliance with Standard Precautions in order to avoid occupational exposure to microorganisms: A focus group study” for your consideration.

Thank you very much for your valuable comments. We have made every effort to revise our manuscript based on the reviewers’ and your comments and recommendations. Below we provide a detailed response based on the reviewers’ comments.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact me via e-mail. I would like to thank you very much in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Georgios Efstatthiou RN, PhDc
On behalf of all the authors
Cyprus University of Technology
**Response to Reviewers’ Comments**

**Reviewer’s Elucir Gir comments**

1. Table 1 has been deleted and its content is now included in the text.
2. The aim of the study has been reviewed and better explained. Additional information on the use and validity of the HBM has been also included.
3. Additional information concerning the invited participants, the selection criteria for the hospitals as well as the clinical disciplines used, has been included in the manuscript.
4. Some additional information concerning hospitals and participants has been added. At this point, no further socio-demographic data were asked from the participants. Based on the local culture and since this was a study which employed discussions within groups, the authors felt that it would be appropriate to avoid asking about their personal characteristics (e.g. marital status, religion) which could influence the discussions, or make some participants reluctant to participate or share ideas.
5. The discussion has now been improved by adding more studies. The authors would like to state that at this point it would be inappropriate to make more discussion since this is a qualitative study which limits its generalizability. Such discussion should be left after the development of the questionnaire (which will be constructed using the data that have emerged of this study) and administration to a large sample of nurses.
6. This study aimed to reveal factors that influence nurses’ compliance with Standard Precautions, and use this information for the development of a questionnaire. The intention of the authors by saying about non-generalizability of data was to make clear that the data coming from this study cannot be used to extract safe conclusions. The reviewer correctly made a comment on how this data can be used to develop a questionnaire for use to larger samples, since the authors acknowledge the limitation of generalizability. The authors have now added that this data along with information coming from other sources (published literature, expert discussions) will be used to develop the questionnaire.

**Reviewer’s Mary-Louise McLaws comments**

1. The article includes now the requirements as stated by the committee of hospital infections in Cyprus and mandated by law.
2. The comments of the reviewer have been addresses by adding within the text more information on the HBM, as well as on its validity on the subject, based on previous studies. The authors would like to state that this article does not aim to compare the different models, but to build on a well known and widely used model in order to achieve its objectives. Although different theoretical models had been considered during the preparation of the study, the authors decided to use the HBM based on their experience with the population under study.
3. The authors acknowledge the fact that other studies have used theoretical frameworks to address the issue of Standard Precautions. It should be stated however that these studies have mainly focussed to one (usually hand hygiene) or very few components of Standard Precaution (face mask use and glove use). Our study focussed on all main components of Standard Precautions.
However, the authors acknowledge the value of the reviewer’s comments in terms of strengthening this article and have therefore included the suggested (and more) references to the manuscript.

4. It was the intention of the authors to present the finding of the results from this study. Therefore no further -at this point- «manipulation» of the model, by adding new components, was considered.

5. Reviewer’s comment no 5 has been addressed in the text. The manuscript now states that only one senior nurse was present to 3 different groups (one at each group). The researchers did not ask from the participants to state if they were junior/staff nurses or senior nursing staff, in order to avoid any influence due to the presence of senior staff. It was also made clear that the discussion were open for exchange of ideas, without anybody having the right to dominate the conversations. For this reason, the moderator of the discussion, always allocated time evenly among the participants, intervening when necessary and did not allow anybody to dominate the discussions (as reported in the manuscript)

6. The manuscript now states that the facilitator was totally unknown to the participants

7. The word Kruger has been replaced with Krueger. The issue of what happened to a factor if could not fit in one of the domains of HBM has already been addressed under the Quality of the Study section.

8. Although this is a very interesting point, it did not come up during any of the discussions. For this reason it is not reported in the text. In addition, the authors believe that it would have been inappropriate to «push» subjects into the discussions, since they (the authors) wanted to elicit responses from the participants.

9. It is the authors’ perception that there is no «low risk» and «medium-high risk» clinical activities, but activities that need or do not need precautions. It would be therefore inappropriate to make such comparison, because it would then give the filling that in «low risk» clinical activities, nurses may choose to comply or not, whereas they are forced to comply in «high risk» activities. The terms high risk and low risk patients was offered by the participating nurses, and these terms have been used in the text. Nevertheless, it is clear that there are no «low risk» or «high risk» patients, but the authors choose to use these terms to show what nurses believe and how their behavior is influenced.

10. Several changes have been made within the text (results section) to follow the reviewer’s suggestion.

11. Concerning the reviewer’s comment on the use of data if they did not fit in the constructs of HBM, this has been answered previously (point 7). At this point the authors would like to state that since this is a qualitative study, using a small sample of nurses to elicit responses it would not be appropriate to make comparisons with other studies, since all published studies have used questionnaires for gathering their data, distributing them to large samples. It is the authors’ sense that such discussion should be left for the future, since the authors plan to use the emerged data from this study to develop a questionnaire and distribute it to nurses.

12. The HBM was used to fit the data after they were collected. This issue is now addressed in the manuscript

13. The authors agree with the reviewer’s comment, therefore they have removed the specific sentence
14. The word «non-willingness» has been deleted as per the reviewer’s suggestion.

English language: The manuscript has been reviewed by a person whose English is the native language.

We hope that the above cover the considerations and suggestions of the reviewers.

The authors confirm that they agree on the above comments.