Author’s response to reviews

Title: The discriminative power of patient experience surveys

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
Dear doctor Norton,

Please find enclosed the second submission of our manuscript entitled ‘The discriminative power of patient experience surveys’, which we hope will be suitable for publication in the journal *BMC Health Services Research*.

The paper reports on the extent to which patient experience surveys are able to detect differences between health care providers. This is currently an important issue since in a number of countries, patient experiences are used to measure provider performance. The paper presents data for various patient groups using corresponding measures of patient experiences and identical methods for data analyses. A number of previous papers have reported on this subject, but as far as the authors are aware, a comprehensive overview in different patient groups such as that provided by the present paper is lacking. We conclude that the differences between providers that are displayed by patient experiences vary between measures and between patient groups. Often, substantial sample sizes are required to reliably detect these differences. The latter particularly applies to measures of experienced change in physical ability following treatment.

Future projects that seek to develop patient experience surveys, may be informed by the present data on the discriminative power of such surveys in a variety of settings. These illustrations may guide expectations on the discriminative power of the survey under development, and, may help choose the unit of analyses at which providers are compared such that the expected number of respondents required per unit of analyses may be achieved.

In response to our first submission, the editorial office informed us that some of the specifications of the journal were not met. As such, we now resubmit the manuscript with a few minor alterations. For your convenience the alterations are included below.

One of the alterations entailed a description of the ethics procedure. We would like to bring to your attention that one of our colleagues has recently published a study in your journal that was conducted under the same ethical conditions as the present manuscript (Trijmstra et al., 2010, *10*:95). Since the description of the ethics procedure in this publication was the result of
correspondence during the reviewing process, we adopted a similar description and trust that this will be to your satisfaction.

We look forward to hear from you,

Yours sincerely,

Dolf de Boer
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Jany Rademakers

Alterations

Method section, second paragraph:

The studies in which the data were collected were performed in agreement with the declaration of Helsinki. Research by means of surveys that are not taxing and/or hazardous for patients is not subject to the Dutch Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act (WMO). Accordingly, ethical approval was not required. All surveys were accompanied by instructions including a statement that participation is voluntarily and anonymous.

At the end of the manuscript:

Competing interests
The author’s declare they have no competing interests

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The funding organizations played no role in the interpretation of the data, and in the preparation, review, or approval of the manuscript.