Author's response to reviews

Title: Assistive Technologies after stroke: self-management or fending for yourself? A focus group study.

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Version: 3 Date: 22 July 2013

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Sir/Madam

Please find a table below of our revisions, in response to the very helpful comments of the referees

Yours sincerely

Dr Caroline Ellis-Hill

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rev.</th>
<th>Requested change</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 Reviewer 1 commented that “the use of abbreviations is excessive in the document and not always clear” and suggested that “abbreviations are not used to enhance readability”</td>
<td>We agree that there are excessive abbreviations in this paper and have removed the following abbreviations and written in full throughout the document: P&amp;C, AT(s), CIMT, ES, HCP, NHS</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2 Reviewer 1 asked whether “the conference was specifically hosted for the recruitment of attendees for the qualitative study or was the conference a good opportunity for recruitment?</td>
<td>On Page 6 we now explain that the interactive exhibition was hosted “to increase stakeholder knowledge about assistive technologies, provide an opportunity for people to try and compare devices and to provide a useful means of recruiting relevant people to the study.” This new text is highlighted</td>
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| 1    | 3 Reviewer 1 highlighted that we described attendees of the conference as patients or carers – how did we ascertain people were carers? not just friends etc) | We agree that conference attendees could have been friends as well as family caregivers. We have added the term friends i) in the abstract ii) on page 6 and c) page 7  
We have also highlighted on page 7 that in the focus group we included people who identified themselves as family caregivers |
| 1    | 4 Reviewer 1 asked for clarification of the number of people who expressed an interest in taking part and how many declined | The number of exhibition attendees willing to be contacted for the focus group study is shown on page 7 (highlighted)  
The number of those willing and able to take part in the relevant focus groups is also shown on page 7 (highlighted) |
| 1    | 5 Reviewer 1 asked for clarification | On page 7 we have highlighted that the |
about whether we aimed for data saturation

number of focus groups was determined a priori, the main aim being to capture the breadth of opinions of the various stakeholders involved rather than to ensure data saturation for each particular stakeholder group. We aimed to develop an understanding of the issues, similarities and differences raised from members in the focus groups, rather than aiming for a theoretical understanding per se. We may have reached data saturation in relation to some of the issues but this was not the intention of our methodology.

We agreed with the reviewer and have removed reference to findings from the survey and have just stated that a survey can further explore this and that this is underway page 28 (highlighted)

We agree that it is repetition; however this was not clear for the other reviewer and so we feel it would be helpful to remind readers that fictitious names have been used. We have added this to the text on page 10 (highlighted)

This sentence is now on page 10 The full-stop has been added (highlighted)

Thank you for highlighting our omission. The sentence has been completed and now reads “Good device design is critical for self-management. This research indicates that there is scope to improve the design of currently available assistive technologies. It is also clear that therapists, people with stroke and their families can all provide useful feedback on and suggestions for improvements in design. (highlighted on page 16)

Thank you for highlighting our error. We have modified the sentence structure to avoid starting with ‘because’. This modification means that the sentence is now also complete. Highlighted on page 17
| 1 | 11 | Reviewer 1 highlighted that the first sentence of the authors’ contributions needed a full stop. | We have added the full-stop as suggested. We also noted that the contribution of SD (first author) had not been declared. This has now been rectified (highlighted). We also amended the section on competing interests on page 32 |
| 1 | 12 | Reviewer 1 noted that the reference list seemed to be in different font sizes | Thank-you for highlighting this –it has now been corrected |
| 2 | 1 | Reviewer 2 noted that it was unclear what was meant by the phrase “lack of HCP confidence” in the abstract | Thank you for highlighting this ambiguity. The abstract has been amended and now reads , “lack of health professional knowledge about assistive technologies and confidence in prescribing them” (highlighted) |
| 2 | 2 | Reviewer 2 requested that the focus group guide be included in the methods or as an appendix | We have now included a Table which covers all four focus group guides. We have now added this information into the method section on page 8 |
| 2 | 3 | Reviewer 2 asked us to clarify methods for data analysis | Further detail on the methods of data analysis is provided on page 9 (highlighted) |
| 2 | 4 | Reviewer 2 asked us to use identifying codes to protect participants’ identifies. | Reviewer 2 was worried that people could be identified. In the paper we have used pseudonyms (fictitious names) and would like to keep these as they enable the reader to engage more fully and help the flow of the text. We have highlighted more clearly in the paper that fictitious names have been used (see page 10). |