Author's response to reviews

Title: A qualitative study of integrated care from the perspectives of patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and their relatives

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Author's response to reviews: see over
To the editor of the BMC Health Services Research

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Revision of the manuscript originally entitled: Integrated care from the perspectives of patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and their relatives: a qualitative interview study.

Dear editor

Thank you for considering our manuscript. In the following I will address your requests and the concerns of the reviewers.

Editorial requests
1. A statement, including a link under "References", has been added in the Methods section about the non-use of ethical reviews for qualitative studies in Denmark.
2. The title "Introduction" has been changed to "Background".
3. The manuscript has been copy-edited by a professional copy-editor situated in the United States of America before resubmission.

Reviewer 1 – Vicki Parker
1-3. The Background section has undergone extensive revisions. The paragraph describing the Danish COPD disease management programme has been moved to methods. Instead we have included more international literature, particularly regarding the nature of integrated care and why it is important in the planning of chronic illness care. This was done to give the background a more international perspective and a tighter focus on the problem at hand.

4. We did not make use of a particular qualitative approach to inform the study. The word Aim has replaced the word purpose in the sentence stating the purpose / aim of the study, and a sentence has been added immediately following the aim to state the intended outcomes.

5. A sentence has been added in the paragraph describing the analysis in the Methods section to mention the comparative analysis that was done to identify possible differences between the groups.

6. The findings of this study are very much grounded in the responses of patients and relatives. During the interviews it was near impossible for the participants to "define" integrated care. Therefore we do not have excerpts from interviews that describe integrated care in a more general way from the perspectives of patients and relatives. Instead the discussions in the focus groups and in the individual interviews were much more linked to specific experiences such as discharge from hospital, seeing their GP etc. which is evident from the excerpts. The
excerpts in the manuscript therefore are not meant to add to the discussion of integrated care on an organizational level as such, but to exemplify and give evidence to the reliability and validity of the analysis and results. That said, we have made some changes in the manuscript to give some clarity to the process of analysis. First, the excerpts have been shortened to include only the most important information. Second, the "Analysis" section under Methods have undergone revisions to show the process of analysis in a more detailed way.

7. The statement concerning transferability of qualitative studies is removed as suggested.
8. We are not entirely sure what the reviewer means regarding the need for the ethics statement to come forward. We have changed the paragraph regarding ethics cf. the editors instructions.
9. The word "interview" has been deleted from the title as suggested.

Reviewer 2 – Sandeep S Nerkar
1. A sentence has been added in the beginning of the background section stating the prevalence of COPD and the importance to address this disease locally and globally.
2. The abstract was revised to more clearly show how many interviews and focus groups were held with patients and relatives respectively.
3. In the first paragraph of the Results section we now mention that the areas of the care process in which patients were satisfied with their care, overall where the same as the areas where other patients experienced problems, including an example from the data material regarding relational continuity in the pulmonary outpatient clinic.
4. We have added subtitles in the Discussion section to facilitate easy reading as suggested.
5. Table 1 has been revised so that, hopefully, it is clear that "4+5" etc. refers to the number of participants in each of two groups including the same type of participants.
6. The title has been changed to better show the inclusion of relatives in the study.
We would very much like to thank the editor and reviewers for their constructive and relevant comments on the manuscript. With the revisions that have been made based on these comments we feel that the quality of the manuscript has improved.

If you have any further questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me again.

Best regards,

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