Author's response to reviews

Title: Nurse clinic versus home delivery of evidence-based community leg ulcer care: A randomized health services trial

Authors:

Margaret B Harrison (Margaret.B.Harrison@Queensu.ca)
Ian D Graham (igraham@cihr-irsc.gc.ca)
Karen Lorimer (klorimer@carefor.ca)
Elizabeth VandenKerkof (EV5@Queensu.ca)
Maureen Buchanan (Baybuch@kos.net)
Phil S Wells (pwells@ottawahospital.on.ca)
Tim Brandys (TBRANDYS@ottawahospital.on.ca)
Tadeusz Pierscianowski (tal@magma.ca)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Dr. Todd:

Once again thank you for the feedback (received by email Oct. 6) about our manuscript “Nurse clinic versus home delivery of evidence-based community leg ulcer care: a randomized health services trial.” In response to the two reviewers’ remarks we offer the following comments/changes with our response underlined.

**Reviewer 1 Dr. Andrew Jull**

Two points (considered by the reviewer as minor Discretionary Revisions)

1. Table 1 uses n (%) and Tables 2 and 3 % (n), preference for the former. Tables 2, 3 and 4 have been modified in the same format as Table 1 n (%) to keep the format consistent throughout the paper as Dr. Jull suggests.

2. Somewhat idiosyncratic approach to a CONSORT flow diagram. Normally such a diagram would include the numbers lost to follow up and the numbers analysed. As this data is included elsewhere in the paper, and can be identified with the supplementary tables. I am relaxed about whether the authors revise the participant flow diagram or not. We would prefer to leave the schema as submitted since as Dr. Jull points out, the information is available in the paper.

**Reviewer 2 Dr. Nicky Cullum**

1. Clarification of how outcomes were captured is now provided on page 8 but there is still no mention of the blinded adjudication of photographs which is first mentioned in the Discussion on page 15. This still needs adding to the methods and is an essential revision still required. This was an oversight. What is detailed in the methods (pg. 8) is how outcomes were captured on each case. The reference to this in the Discussion was missed in the first revision and is now removed.
Additional remarks related to Reviewer 1’s (Dr. Jull) feedback.

2. More information on the HRQoL instrument- what was added on pages 8 – 9 confusing with respect to the SF-12. The authors introduce the SF-12 on page 8 – stating that the SF-12 is what they used. They then go on to discuss the SF-36 in some depth – implying that they decided to use that; they then go on to say they used the SF-12 after all – but they had already told us this. I think this long paragraph could be greatly simplified whilst retaining the important detail. Agree the passage was a bit long and has been edited shortened.

3. Unnecessary to report differences between groups at baseline. The authors have chosen to disregard this and it was discretionary but Dr Jull is correct – the only point in doing significance tests on baseline variables is if you suspect that randomisation was subverted, since randomisation was properly executed, by definition any significant differences in baseline variables have occurred by chance – and this is only what a significance test tells you anyway (the probability that a difference of that size occurred by chance). The significance test doesn’t tell you if there were important differences (since adjusted analyses for even non-significant baseline differences can have important effects on results). We did decide to leave it in as it was a discretionary point but should have explained our reasoning. In earlier studies in Canadian publications (e.g. CMAJ) we have presented this data. It was simply a matter of consistency with our previous reports.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the reviewers and I trust we have been able to respond to their questions and concerns. We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Margaret B. Harrison, RN PhD
Professor, School of Nursing,
Cross Appointed Community Health and Epidemiology
Director, Queen’s Joanna Briggs Collaboration and
Senior Scientist, Practice and Research in Nursing Group