Author's response to reviews

Title: Hispanic Construction Worker Perspectives on Factors Impacting Worksite Safety and Risk: A qualitative investigation

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Version: 2 Date: 14 July 2011

Author's response to reviews:

Dear Dr. Ozonoff:

Thank you for the opportunity to revise our manuscript in response to the reviewers’ helpful comments. This cover letter responds to the comments that they made that required response and the manuscript is "tracked" using MS Word's track changes function with the changes that were made. I look forward to your decision.

Sincerely,
Cora Roelofs

Reviewers’ Comments

Dr. Meliá's comment number two points out that the findings are not generalizable and that they should not be considered to reflect the experience of all Hispanics. We agree and include this point in the discussion of the limitations of the study. In the paper as a whole, we avoid characterizing the population of Hispanic construction workers in terms of culture or other socioeconomic characteristics and instead focus on their experiences and perspectives. Indeed, part of our reading of the situation is that cultural factors have a limited role to play in explaining or addressing worksite hazards. However, in response to his comment we have strengthened the caveat by adding the following sentence in the newly enhanced limitations discussion: It is especially important to note that Hispanics cannot be characterized as a singular or uniform cultural, linguistic, economic or other social group.

In comments three and five, Dr. Meliá suggests that the results of this investigation may be used in forming hypotheses or as the basis for quantitative studies and that surveys would complement these findings. We not only agree but have just completed our survey which was based in part upon these findings. We have collected 250 surveys from construction workers and others and we are in the midst of interpreting the results. For instance, we asked for respondents’
ability to speak English and are using that as a variable in the analysis to determine its effect on their perspective of training adequacy and pressure to cut corners, etc. Interestingly, we also collected more qualitative data with these surveys and we will also be analyzing those data. As you know, with complex phenomena such as the social context of work and immigrant status, it is immensely difficult to tell the story in just a few words or numbers. That is why we have elected to use many methods to investigate this public health problem and are anxious to fully share what we learn by all methods. We are not prepared at this time to compare the qualitative and quantitative findings, but we intend to do that following analysis of the survey. Because our findings are limited by the methodology (as most findings are in some way or another), we provided an extension discussion of other researchers’ findings and how what we found fits or do not fit the work of others.

Dr. Menzel’s comments are answered below and revised in the text:

1. Was there any incentive paid to attend the focus groups? Yes -- $50 to attend all three nights.

2. Was there any minimum amount of experience required as an inclusion criterion? No, but only participants with some construction experience were invited to participate. We do not have information available on the years of construction experience of the participants.

3. Was there 100% attendance from the first night over all three nights? Yes.

4. What limitations does this study have? Limitations are discussed and enhanced in the text – we have added the following paragraph:

There are several potential limitations of this study. These data represent the views of a few individuals at a specific time and place. Limited qualitative data are not, as a rule, generalizable to larger populations. It is especially important to note that Hispanics cannot be characterized as a singular or uniform cultural, linguistic, economic or other social group. Additional limitations of the study include: lack of comparison of the data with alternative perspectives, possible errors of translation from Spanish to English, lack of verbal cues for interpretation, possible lingual and cultural misinterpretation, and unreflected bias of the interpreter of the results. We do believe however, that these data and analysis are representative of the experiences of some Hispanic construction workers in the Northeast United States circa 2009.

5. To what populations can it be generalized? We wouldn’t suggest that the findings are generalizable, but that they may be representative of common experiences of Spanish-speaking immigrant construction workers in the Northeast circa 2009.

Dr. Menzel also notes that there were too many quotes presented and we have done some consolidation and trimming. We have also clarified the term Hispanic/Latino and made her other corrections.