Author’s response to reviews

Title: Best practices for collecting repeated measures data using text messages

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Author’s response to reviews:

September 3, 2019

Dear Dr. Krüger:

Thank you for the opportunity to revise our manuscript, “Best practices for collecting repeated measures data using text messages”. We thank Dr. Mars for his recommendations; they greatly informed the revised paper where we now review the literature and include varied international studies that utilized text messages to collect data.

The extensive manuscript modifications made our tracked changes less meaningful so we present an unmarked manuscript. We are happy to provide a tracked manuscript if the reviewers or editors would find that helpful.

Please find our responses to Dr. Mars’ comments attached.

On behalf of all authors, thank you for your consideration of this revised manuscript.

Sincerely,

Noa’a Shimoni MD MPH
Reviewer reports:

Maurice Mars (Reviewer 1): Thank you for the opportunity to review this paper which provides recommendations for using text messages and replies for gathering patient information. The authors draw on their experience and lessons learned in six studies using text messaging for data acquisition.

Herein lies part of the problem. They only refer to their own work. There is no literature cited against which to compare their opinions. Of the seven references, six are to their own studies upon which the recommendations are based. Does the current literature support or refute each of their 15 recommendations?

Author response:

Thank you for this observation. It prompted us to perform a literature search to review studies that address data collection through text messaging. Our updated methodology is reported in lines 88-91. While this is not intended as a comprehensive systematic review, it allowed us to synthesize other findings and corroborate our own.

We created the table as a set of prompts for investigators to consider. Some are supported by data and others are common sense considerations. Many are not likely to be formally evaluated in studies.

Author response:

There are several places in the paper where there should be references to support statements made, eg lines 67-68, 97, 173, 175, 176 and others.

Supportive references now appear throughout the manuscript.

For example, lines 67-68 (currently lines 68-69) now include references.
Although presented in the IMRD format the paper has not aim and the methods are not presented in enough detail to be replicated.

Author response:

The methodology is now presented in lines 88-91.

The recommendations are presented in an anecdotal manner.

The section on The Phone has important information regarding technical difficulties and failure to resolve these. What were these difficulties? Why could they not be solved? Have others experienced the same problems? Have others managed to resolve them?

Author response:

The origin of some of the earlier technical phone difficulties still remains a mystery. We devised systems to identify problems early and now confirm messages can be sent and received when we complete enrollment. We discuss the earlier difficulties in the Results Phone section and our solutions in the Discussion Phone section.

The discussion expands on their recommendation but lacks reference to other sources that support or contradict their point of view.

In effect the paper, as presented, is an opinion piece.

Author response:

We believe that this revision has substantively increased the depth and breadth of this paper and strengthened our best practices and hope the editors and reviewers agree.