Author’s response to reviews

Title: The theoretical and empirical basis of a BioPsychoSocial (BPS) Risk Screener for detection of older peoples’ health related needs, planning of community programs, and targeted care interventions

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We thank the reviewers for their helpful comments and address these in full below. Should you require any further information please don’t hesitate to ask.

1. Unfortunately, we cannot accept your authorship change form in its current state. We need the author’s actual signature on an actual page. We can accept images/multiple sheets used to sign the ACF, but we can’t accept copy/pasted signatures. Please resubmit your authorship change form that all authors have signed and do not use copy/pasted signatures in this form.
• We have re-collected the signatures as requested and attach the file containing everyone’s agreement, with original signatures scanned for each author. The NUS team signed the same form, while authors at other institutions signed individual forms.

2. Please include all consent information in your ethics section of your declarations, including what form consent was taken in (i.e. written or verbal)

• We agree that such details add to the paper, and have outlined these fully below, while clarifying them further. In the current analysis, we used a secondary de-identified and IRB approved data source, so we explain the original data collection in the text, p. 11 and declarations, p. 24. As the original data collection was carried out as public health practice initiative and conformed to local ministry of health SoPs for such initiatives. Where judged necessary, verbal agreement/ proxy consent was gained from care givers before administering the cognitive impairment test and survey, and signed consent was gained from all participants. We have moved the inter-RAI reference to p.11, it is now ref #41.

• NUS were given an exemption certificate to use the data (originally collected by Tsao Foundation with MoH funding using a contracted survey company) in its fully de-identified form. We also gained IRB approval on an amendment to link our data via the ministry, who carried out the linkages adhering to protocol and who then gave us the final fully de-identified dataset which was used in our analysis. Our dataset therefore has all necessary approvals (Ref: B-15-110) from NUS ethical review board to be used as a secondary data source; this information was also moved up to p. 11.