Author’s response to reviews

Title: A cost-effectiveness study of ICT training among the visually impaired in the Netherlands

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Subject: Submission of revised paper ‘A cost-effectiveness study of ICT training among the visually impaired in the Netherlands’ BOPH-D-17-00245

Dear Dr. Tu,

Thank you for your email [29th of January 2018] enclosing reviewers’ comments. We greatly appreciate the time and effort invested in reviewing our manuscript. We have carefully reviewed the comments and revised the manuscript accordingly. Please find attached our responses in a point-by-point manner.

On behalf of my co-authors, we thank you for providing us with the opportunity to resubmit the manuscript and we hope that the revised version is now acceptable for publishing. We look forward to hearing from you again.
Reviewer 1

Thank you for your time and effort invested in reviewing our manuscript. We appreciate your suggestions and comments. Below you find our response to your comments in a point-to-point manner.

Reviewer 1, point 1: Comments relating to the grammatical correctness

P5 line 15 "seen as a mean to increase independence and enabling participation in the society" should be "seen as a means to increase independence and enable participation in society".

Response: We agree with the reviewer and therefore we have corrected the sentence. Amendment can be found under background, page 5 and line 17.

P6 line 5 "..not simultaneously with other training." This is repeated in next sentence

Response: We fully agree with the reviewer that this “simultaneously” should be rephrased in one of the sentences. We have decided to remove “simultaneously” in the second sentence. Adjustment can be found under section ‘Methods’, page 6 and line 8.
P6 line 12 "...ICT training has been a part of standard rehabilitative care for a longer time". This is poor English - it was better in its original version

Response: As suggested by the reviewer, we have changed the sentence back to what it was in the original version. Amendment can be found under section ‘Method’, page 6 and line 14.

P7 line 3 "... the researchers provided assistance through telephone" Poor English. This was better in original version.

Response: As suggested by the reviewer, we have changed the sentence back to what it was in the original version. Amendment can be found in section ‘Methods’, on page 7, line 4 to 5.

P8 line 19 "The D-AI measures rehabilitation needs of visually impaired persons and rehabilitation outcomes, hence is the vehicle towards possible improvement in well-being (ICECAP-O) and health-related quality of life (EQ-5D)." This is poorly written - it isn't the D-AI which is the vehicle, it is successfully addressing the needs which is likely to achieve the improvement.

Response: We agree with reviewer, and we have adjusted the sentences to clarify what we exactly mean, this can be found under section ‘Methods’, page 8, line 20 to 21.

Reviewer 1, Point 2: P10, line 21. You say here that you have assumed that those who didn't complete the training didn't gain in QoL or wellbeing. I think it would be better to delete this statement, since you haven't included this zero improvement for 14 participants in your calculations, and this statement might give the impression that you had.
Response: We agree with the reviewer that this sentence is misleading. Amendment has been made under section ‘ICT training costs’, page 10, line 21.

Reviewer 1, Point 2: P18 line 4. The description of the Bray et al study is still incorrect!

Response: We agree with the reviewer and apologize for this mistake. We have changed the sentence in the ‘Discussion’, page 18, line 4 by pointing out that: “The nature of vision enhancement systems is quite different from the rehabilitative intervention evaluated in this study”.

Reviewer 1, Point 3: P18 line17 It is not appropriate to compare the changes in the ICECAP(O) in this study with changes in a different instrument in another study to assess clinical relevance. There is no reason to assume that a change of 0.04 in one instrument is the same as 0.04 in a different instrument, even if both are measuring a function described as "well being". This comparison should be deleted.

Response: We agree with the reviewer that there is no reason to assume that a change in one instrument is equal to a change in another instrument, even if both instruments are measuring well-being. We believe that the preceding sentence, where we focus on the ICECAP-O is more useful and sufficient. Therefore, we have decided to delete the sentence where we make the above-mentioned faulty comparison. Amendment can be found under section ‘Discussion’, page 18, line 17-21.
Reviewer 2

Thank you for your time and effort invested in reviewing our manuscript. We appreciate your suggestions and comments. Below you find our response to your comments in a point-to-point manner.

Reviewer 2, point 1: Abstract-Include SD after mean age or range
Instead of 'if' may be better to rephrase to 'assuming'

Response: We agree with the reviewer. We have included the SD after age in the abstract, page 2 and line 17. We have also included replaces ‘if’ with ‘assuming’, as we also agree that ‘assuming’ is more appropriate. Adjustment can be seen in the Abstract, page 2 and line 18.

Reviewer 2, point 2: Ethical approval- It is not clear if ethical approval was obtained for the project. Please include this information.

Response: As stated in the section “Ethics approval and consent to participate”, the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (CCMO) did not consider ethical approval necessary. We have clarified this in the section “Ethics approval and consent to participate”. Amendment can be found on page 21, line 4.

Reviewer 2, point 3: Page 16 Line 15 'Overheads' not 'Overhead '
Page 16 line 17- to be consistent use the symbol for euros (150 euros)
Response: We have changed ‘overhead’ to ‘overheads’, amendment can be found under section ‘Methods’, page 9, line 7 and also under section ‘ICT training costs’, page 10, line 15. We acknowledge that it is important to be consistent and therefore we have changed the word ‘euro’ to the symbol ‘€’. Adjustments can be found under section ‘ICT training costs’, page 10, line 17.