Author's response to reviews

Title: Differential Experiences of Discrimination among Ethnoracially Diverse Persons Experiencing Mental Illness and Homelessness

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Version: 3
Date: 14 October 2014

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

Thank you and the reviewers for the helpful comments and the opportunity to improve the quality of our manuscript. Below we have detailed our responses and corrections to each of the reviewers' comments. Specific information about the article section is included where applicable.

**REVIEWER 1**

**Discretionary and Minor Essential Revisions**

*The question is well-defined, and the methods well-described. The data appear to be sound. Might it have been possible to include a graphic representation of the quantitative data analysis?*

§ Thank you for this comment. We have included three tables which we believe clearly exhibit the quantitative findings.

*A more descriptive title might better convey the results of the study, “How Multiple / Compound / Intersecting Identities contribute to Homelessness” – this is only a suggestion.*

§ We changed the title to “Differential experiences of discrimination among an ethnoracially diverse sample of persons experiencing mental illness and homelessness” to better reflect the article’s content.

*On line 57 consider replacing the word “about” with “regarding”*

*On line 85 consider deleting the “s” at the end of “addictions”*

*On line 92 consider replacing the word “mean” with “result in”*

*On line 94 consider adding the word “the” between resolve and negative*

*On line 150 consider offering a range for how much subjects were compensated*

§ Thank you! We have made these edits in the revised version.

**Major Compulsory Revisions**

*The only major revision is that the conclusion lacks any recommendation or pathway as to how to use this new information to resolve, address or ameliorate the problem. i.e. What are the next steps now that a more in-depth understanding of the problem has been achieved in this research? Please add a sentence or two about next steps.*

§ Articulating next steps is an important addition to the article, so thank you for the suggestion. We added these sentences to the end of the Conclusion section:

Becoming literally homeless, and/or of being newly diagnosed with a mental illness, had a profoundly devastating impact on the lives of study participants. Future research should not only heed the enormity of these causes for discrimination, and explore key elements in service delivery that might support coping and resilience, but also strive to disentangle the complex effects these identities have on various subgroups; as this research revealed, for example, reactions traditionally seen as negative (such as social distancing) can have important positive consequences for women and for individuals with social support systems living abroad.
REVIEWER 2

Discretionary Revisions

The Qualitative section is at times difficult to follow given that there is so much information that is being organized/categorized under three specific themes. The current use of headings is somewhat helpful; however, the ‘social distancing’ and ‘old and new label’ sections appear at times disjointed. Given what the authors are attempting to convey using their qualitative data, the homeland culture section is best organized. In comparison, the ‘old and new labels’ section appears to include two sub-themes, race/ethnicity and homeless/mental illness. However in your discussion of these sub-themes, there appears to be additional layers to the data that get lost within the discussion. For example, within the homeless/mental illness sub-theme, the authors discuss several more nuanced themes, which appear to be the general link between being homeless and having a mental illness (Page 12, line 291-301), the difficulty of accepting the new label as an identity (Page 13, 302-312), the autonomy of disclosing the new label (Page 13, 313-318), and coping with the stigma attached to the new label (Page 13, 319-325). Upon the first read through in its current format, these more nuanced themes are not easily comprehended. Possibly the introduction of more headings or more clearly worded topic sentences at the beginning of each paragraph will better organize this section and help the reader understand the more nuanced interactions within your data.

§ This was a very helpful observation. We have reorganized the “social distancing” section into two separate subsections titled “reasons for social distancing” and “varied effects of social distancing.” Similarly, the “old and new labels” section was reorganized and topic sentences clarified to improve the flow of content. The final subsections of each theme were labeled “Summary” and reworked to ensure the content could be cohesively understood.

Minor Essential

Page 9, Theme: Social Distancing paragraph, (“Stigma emerged as … “): Discrimination is properly defined earlier in the manuscript (“been treated unfairly by others in Canada”, p.6); however, stigma is often loosely referred to and never really concretely defined by the authors. It would be helpful to clarify whether stigma was defined for the respondents or by the respondents. Ultimately, it is hard to appreciate the meaning of the qualitative data when there no clear operationalization of term stigma, which restricts the readers understanding of exactly what aspect of being stigmatized is characterized by the theme of social distancing.

§ Though asked generally about being “treated unfairly”, the concepts of discrimination and stigma were not explicitly defined or operationalized for interviewees, as the intent was to understand how they conceived of and described experiences associated with these individual identities. This explanation was added to the description of the interviewees in the qualitative data sources section.

Major Compulsory Revisions

Page 5-6, (“From the total sample of 550 participants….“) Although it is important to report the demographic makeup of the 36 individuals who were interviewed, it is equally important to provide descriptive statistics of the full sample utilized for the manuscript. Without including such data, the reader lacks an understanding of the external validity (or generalizability) of these findings. Also, the absence of demographic information describing the entire sample limits the ability for future research to replicate or expound upon your findings. Finally, it remains unclear whether the demographic makeup of the subsample of 36 individuals (as detailed in Table 2) is representative of the full sample, which leaves me to wonder if the themes described in the qualitative data are representative of the larger sample.

§ This is a very good point, thank you. We have added selected demographic characteristics of the subsample (N=231) from which the qualitative subsample (N=36) was derived (see Table 1).
These are described and compared with the smaller subsample in the text. We also moved these descriptive data about the study sample into the Methods section where the sample(s) are described.

Page 8, first paragraph of the results section (“Quantitative (Table 1)…” ) The frequency and type of discrimination experienced by this sample is important data to report. However, given the proposed main objective of the manuscript is to highlight the additive effects of multiple identities on discrimination/stigma, the quantitative data provide very little insight regarding these additive effects in your full sample. In light of the variability across several demographic variables (e.g., immigration status, ethnicity/race, years homeless) described in Table 2, the authors should provide the readers some data regarding how these demographic variables (or minority statuses) impact reported discrimination/stigma. The authors can use simple statistical methods (e.g., percentages, frequency distribution, chi square analyses) to highlight these distinctions for the full sample. For example, in comparing foreign-born vs. Canadian-born participants in the full sample, it allows the reader to get a sense of how multiple identities (i.e., immigration status, being homeless, and having a mental illness) combine to influence the frequency of a specific type of perceived discrimination (e.g., being homeless, impoverished).

§ Thank you for this excellent suggestion. We had, in fact, run these analyses before conducting our qualitative interviews, and the findings directed us to pay special attention to immigrant status in the qualitative analysis. This revised version of the manuscript includes these additional quantitative analyses (a supplementary table is provided) and the findings are integrated throughout the methods, results, and discussion sections.

EDITOR

The abstract says “231 ethnoracial participants.” This should be “231 ethnoracially diverse participants.”

§ This change was made.

More information is needed about the larger sample (consider adding an additional column to your demographics table with this information).

§ Additional columns were added to Table 2 to provide information about the larger sample from which the qualitative interview sub-sample was drawn. We removed some of the rows from Table 2 to economize on space, but reported on the removed data in the text.

Where did the interviews come from? Were they structured?

§ These semi-structured interviews were completed as a part of a sub-study of the At Home/Chez Soi study which specifically assessed issues related to ethnoracially diverse participants’ experiences with discrimination, coping and resilience associated with their race, mental health, and homelessness status. We added this description, and the term “semi-structured”, to the explanation of the qualitative data sources section for clarification.

The demographics should be in the Methods section, under “Participants.”

§ Thank you for this suggestion. The section labeled “Sample Description (Table 2)” was moved into the Methods subsection titled “Study Sample.”

Make sure all references are complete, especially online references.

§ We reviewed all of the references and made necessary edits and additions.
We thank the reviewers for their detailed and helpful comments and believe the revised version is much stronger. Please feel free to contact me with any additional comments or questions.

Sincerely,

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