Author's response to reviews

Title: Overcoming barriers to recruiting ethnic minorities to mental health research: a typology of recruitment strategies

Authors:

Waquas Waheed (waquas.waheed@lancashirecare.nhs.uk)
Adrine Woodham (adrine.woodham@manchester.ac.uk)
Adwoa Hughes-Morley (adwoa.hughes-morley@manchester.ac.uk)
Gill Brown (gillian.brown@edgehill.ac.uk)
Peter Bower (peter.bower@manchester.ac.uk)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor

Thank you very much for providing us the opportunity to revise our paper. We appreciate the both reviewer’s time and effort to provide us with their comments. We have made extensive changes as per their suggestions.

The manuscript has also been revised by experienced native English speaking co authors.

Best wishes

Dr Waquas Waheed

Authors reply to reviewer comments is in RED

REVIEWER 1:

When assessing the work, please consider the following points:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?

The question is not well defined. It is an important question and should be more pointed and clearer for the reader. In fact, the question was not recognized as such in the manuscript.

We have now clearly formulated the question and added to the text lines 87-88.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?

Yes. The methods section is described, but it should have more details about it. What particular ethnic minority groups were the focus of the review process? How were these groups determined with regard to issues that are faced in the United Kingdom?

We did not aim to focus this review on any particular ethnic minority group or country of residence. Our aim was to document recruitment strategies across all hard to reach ethnic groups residing in any country. Therefore no specific search terms for any specific ethnic group or country were used. Although the included papers report findings from different ethnic groups but due to paucity of published research in this area there were no publications available from outside the United States for inclusion in the review (see lines 99-103).

3. Are the data sound?

Based on the review process, this reviewer would think that the data are sound. This is an article that is based on a systematic review of published manuscripts. However, if the methods were more detailed, it certainly be helpful to someone else who might wish to replicate the study. This, too, can be corrected.

We have added details to the description of the literature search process in the methods section. For detailed description of the methods and a reference to our already published recruitment barriers review was already mentioned in the text (see line 99-103).

4. Do the figures appear to be genuine, i.e. without evidence of manipulation?
No much relevance for this manuscript. There is no way to make the determination.

No changes required

5. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?

Yes. Since the researchers analyzed published data that are in the public domain, there should be limited concern about standards for reporting and data deposition.

No changes required

6. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

Yes. But…the authors might consider using subheadings for the discussion and separate out the different factors that are associated with each of the ethnic minority groups that are being discussed. Then, a concluding statement about the overlapping factors that are evident in all of the ethnic minority groups as related to recruitment could conclude the study.

The primary aim of this paper was to create a resource of strategies that can be employed across different ethnic groups. Therefore we have taken a broad approach in presenting and discussing the findings. There is a large commonality of recruitment barriers between different ethnic groups and in our view strategies effective in one ethnic group are certainly of relevance to other groups as well. Therefore linking them to specific ethnic groups will not bring any specific benefits. Table 2 documents the target population for each included paper and Table 3 shows strategies employed by each paper. These two table read in conjunction can provide the reader with further ethnic specific strategies if needed.

7. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?

Limitations of the work are not adequately discussed and should be included in the paper.

We have added a limitations section (see lines 515-519)

8. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?

Yes. The authors have done a good job with the literature review and analyses and they have linked it directly to clinical practice, and future research that should/will include ethnic minority people with mental illnesses. They clearly make the case that the science is flawed without having data about all people in a community, especially those who are at risk or suffering from preventable and treatable health conditions.

No changes required

9. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?

Yes. It is okay.

No changes required
10. Is the writing acceptable?

Yes, as a first round for review. Overall, the manuscript should be carefully edited as this is an important topic that has implications for the United Kingdom, and international communities as well.

We have reviewed the manuscript and improved the quality of writing.

Please make your review as constructive and detailed as possible in your comments so that authors have the opportunity to overcome any serious deficiencies that you find and please also divide your comments into the following categories:

- Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)
  
- Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct) **No changes required**
  
- Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

  o Identify a problem statement: **Question added to introduction section**
  
  o Clearly state the purpose: **Added to introduction and method section**
  
  o Provide more detail for the methods section, including the analysis. **Further details added**
  
  o Refine the findings, discussion, and conclusion **Manuscript has been revised**

**Reviewer 2**

Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached):

1. A lot of the language throughout the manuscript is disjointed and confusing. I highly recommend the authors go through and make sentences more concise and clear so that readers can easily follow.

   We have reviewed the manuscript and made recommended changes.

2. Going along with revision number 1, after a very strong results section, I felt the discussion section did not do an effective job of summarizing findings and prompting future research in an organized and directive manner. The discussion section had appropriate content, however it had little flow to it and was difficult to read. Specifically, I feel the authors did not use enough commas, making it difficult to comprehend great points being made. I often found myself going back to re-read sentences and this took away from great points the authors were making within this section.

   Discussion section has been revised as per reviewer’s recommendations.
Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore):

3. Elaboration on some of the recruitment methods. Some of the recruitment suggestions may be in general terms and should be expounded on a bit for clarity. We have revisited the draft and made changes.

4. Although the tables are well constructed, it may help readers better understand suggestions if for every technique, the population that each study used was clearly stated within the results section.

We aimed to create a resource of strategies that can be employed across different ethnic groups. Therefore we have taken a broad approach in presenting and discussing the findings. Table 2 documents the target population for each included paper and Table 3 shows strategies employed by each paper. These two tables read in conjunction can provide the reader with further ethnic specific strategies if needed.

5. Lines 32-37: Potentially mention some of the barriers impacting ethnic minority research participation.

Main barriers have been inserted into the paragraph.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct):

Typos or disjointed phrasing (I recommend reading through the entire manuscript to find additional grammatical issues):

6. Line 63: suggested change- "from these ethnic minorities" to "from these ethnic minority groups". Changed as recommended

7. Line 64: confusing wording- "underutilisation of with poor health research" Wording corrected

8. Line 66: confusing wording- "less than half of the studies identified, reported ethnic and racial data for their sample" We have replaced this with actual figures.

9. Line 93-94: "ethnic minorities" to "ethnic minority groups". Changed as recommended

10. Line 109: "finally" informal language. Sentence has been rephrased.

11. Line 152: "there are difficult to translate and explain scientific phrases" disjointed sentence. Sentence has been rephrased.

12. Line 252: "flexibly" to "flexibility". Changed as recommended

Elaboration or clarification:
13. Line 48: What two barriers? The two barriers psychopathology/substance misuse and paucity of resources available have been added to the sentence.

14. Lines 54-58: More information about specific findings are needed here. We have added to the conclusion section but discussing specific findings is beyond the 350 word limit for abstracts.

15. Lines 76-82: First it is stated that concerns about mistrust is a dominating barrier among Afro Americans, then it is suggested that we should ensure access to health research instead of trying to change minority attitudes? I know that this claim was made because of enrollment decisions made by ethnic minorities suggested that they were just as likely to participate in research studies, but won't mistrust serve as a significant barrier to treatment progress? The paragraph has been revised to clarify the point.

16. Line 85: outline the overarching themes. Table 1 describing the overarching themes has been moved here instead of result section.