Author's response to reviews

Title: Beyond resistance: Social factors in the general public response to pandemic influenza

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear David Muscatello

Thank you for this opportunity to revise our manuscript. The feedback and comments have been extremely useful and we all think the paper is much improved. Please see below, details of how we have responded to the points raised by the reviewers.

Yours sincerely

Mark Davis
9 January 2015

Revisions

Afrodita Marcu

Major revisions:
1. Revise abstract for clarity and address use of the word ‘questionable’

** The abstract has been substantially revised to take account of other requested changes, see below. The word ‘questionable’ is no longer used.

2. Revise background in relation to other qualitative research, contribution to knowledge and the implied emphasis on a priori categories not compatible with inductive analysis.

** The background has been revised to include further qualitative research findings and to clarify the contribution to knowledge of the paper. The reference to a priori categories and their relation to inductive analysis is explained in the methods section.

3. Revise methods to include questions used to facilitate discussion in interviews/FGS and the concern regarding whether this research is inductive.
The methods now explain the scope and content of questions used in interviews and focus groups. As detailed now in the methods, our approach to qualitative research is framed by a dialectic approach that entails moving constantly moving between theory and data, and this is consistent with cutting edge qualitative inquiry in sociology and social psychology. This approach leads to a mix of a priori and inductively derived categories appearing in qualitative analyses. Philosophically, we assume that it is not possible to pose a question of social reality without having a pre-existing theory about it. Even pure grounded theory is subject to the assumptions held by the researcher as they read and code texts in their analysis, an observation that has led to criticism of the epistemological approach which assumes the data can speak for itself and that the researcher is not involved in what that data reveals of social reality. Our approach simply makes this dialectic of theory and data explicit and open to interrogation.

4. Revise results so that more interpretive subheadings are used and incorporate quotations on the text and more thoroughly interpret them. Also the idea that participants make ‘flawed risk calculations’ was also questioned. **New subheadings have been included and the quotations are situated in the text and more thoroughly digested. The claim that participants make flawed risk calculations has been amended.**

5. Revise the discussion to make it clear what this paper brings to the field and specify strengths and weaknesses. **The discussion has been revised to foreground the contribution to knowledge and a statement on strengths and weaknesses has been included.**

Minor revisions:

1. Revise methods to included data on H1N1 deaths, the use of the words ‘disclosure,’ ‘recruited’ and ‘social norms.’ **H1N1 mortality figures have been included and language use queries have been addressed.**

2. Revise results to provide further in-depth interpretation of data and address language in the sentence ‘they had ever had an influenza vaccination’ **Results amended as indicated above and the language issue has been addressed.**

3. Amend date in reference for Davis in SHI **Amended.**

Discretionary revisions

1. Address the sentence at the Lines 22-23, p3 as it is ambiguous **Amended**
2. Reflect on any differences between Scotland vs Australia
** This has been addressed in the methods and in the results.

Bernadette Sebar

Minor revisions:

1. Missing ref p3, line 22 awareness of different levels of advice
** This point has been edited out of the current version.

2. Explain importance of the research in the abstract
** The abstract now explains why this research is important.

Discretionary revisions:

1. Further contextualise the research problem in the abstract and in the background.
** The abstract and background now situate the research problem in the situation of emerging infectious diseases and makes a more streamlined argument with regard to the contribution to knowledge of this paper.

2. On p3, line 12 – replace in addition with however.
** Amended

3. In methods, explain how this paper relates to other papers we have written, and make it clear that a thematic analysis was conducted.
** The methods now explains how this paper relates to our previous work. As above, further clarity is provided with regard to our analytic approach.

4. Amend results by focussing on data and saving connections with the literature for the discussion.
** This has been done with a substantial rewrite of the results and discussion to give a much stronger paper.

5. Introduce the idea of health individualism in the background
** This has been done and the theme has been reinforced throughout the paper.

6. Comment of any differences between Australia versus Scotland
** As noted, we have commented in methods and in the results. We found more convergence of themes than differences.

7. Amend title
** The title has been amended to express the argument of the paper

8. Language issues: Use of ‘publics,’ ‘focused’ and ‘Southern’ and overuse of colons.
** All addressed

9. Tighter expression in abstract and background

** Abstract has been substantially rewritten and the background amended for clarity.