Author’s response to reviews

Title: Palliative care specialists' perceptions concerning referral of haematology patients to their services: findings from a qualitative study

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LETTER OF RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS’ COMMENTS

Dear Editor,

Re: Palliative care specialists’ perceptions concerning referral of haematology patients to their services: findings from a qualitative study (PCAR-D-17-00183)

We are pleased that our manuscript is now potentially acceptable for publication in BMC Palliative Care. We thank the Editor for bringing a number of further essential revisions to our attention, which we have addressed below:
Editor’s Comments:

Comment: The manuscript reads very well and I believe is ready to be accepted. Prior to this I would recommend the authors proof read it. I note a few typos in the added text, for instance in the heading for Figure 1 and a missing 'to' in the last sentence before the section on ethical considerations.

Response: We have proof read the manuscript again and believe we have corrected all typos, including those in the heading for Figure 1 and the last sentence before the section on ethical considerations.

Further authors’ comments:

Comment 1: In our previous reviewers’ comments we were asked to include a section entitled ‘Consent to Publish’ in our manuscript, which we did. On further consideration, however, and despite careful scrutiny of the Journal’s guidelines, we are unclear about the need to include this statement in our manuscript. This is because our manuscript does not contain patient data, clinical data, or trial data; nor is it a ‘dataset’ as such. Instead, our findings are derived from verbal accounts from clinical practitioners about their experiences in delivering health-care to patients and their relatives.

Accordingly, we have changed our response in this section to ‘Not Applicable’. We are, however, open to accept further advice and recommendations about this from the Journal and if we do need to include this section, we would like to use the following text:

‘All participants were provided with an information sheet and gave written, informed consent for verbatim quotations to be included in publications and conference presentations’.
Comment 2: For purposes of clarity, we have amended our original text in the section ‘Availability of Data and Materials’, so that it provides more detailed information about this issue. The section now reads as follows:

‘All data and materials relating to this research are from the Haematological Malignancy Research Network and are archived and maintained by the first and last author, according to organisational and ethical stipulations. Data are not publicly available due to the risk of participant identification from specific contexts revealed when reading entire transcripts and due to the terms and conditions regarding the release of data to third parties upon which ethical approvals for this study were contingent. Reasonable requests for further information relating to this data can be made to the corresponding author’.

Comment 3: We noted a number of citations in our Reference list where formatting was not aligned with the Journal’s requirements; these discrepancies have now been fully rectified.