Author’s response to reviews

Title: Is care staff equipped for end-of-life communication? A cross-sectional study in long-term care facilities to identify determinants of self-efficacy

Authors:

Kirsten Evenblij (k.evenblij@vumc.nl)

Maud ten Koppel (m.tenkoppel@vumc.nl)

Tinne Smets (Tinne.Smets@vub.be)

Guy Widdershoven (g.widdershoven@vumc.nl)

Bregje Onwuteaka-Philipsen (b.philipsen@vumc.nl)

Roeline Pasman (hrw.pasman@vumc.nl)

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Author’s response to reviews:

Lorraine Venturato (Reviewer 1):

Thank you for your meticulously prepared Response to Reviewers. It has made the second review process very clear. My remaining comments are: There are still a few minor grammatical issues, particularly in the beginning of the paper:

Reply: After having completed the requested revisions, an English language editing agency checked the manuscript for grammatical errors.

Comment 1: Line 48 - "a significant proportion of people dies in long-term care facilities" should read "a significant proportion of people die in long-term care facilities"

Reply: We corrected the sentence as suggested.
Comment 2: Line 49 - "In the Netherlands, for example, it concerns 35% of the people with a chronic condition" could read "In the Netherlands, for example, approximately 35% of the people with a chronic condition die in long-term care settings annually"

Reply: We corrected the sentence as suggested.

Comment 3: Line 229 "..and knowledge of the definition of palliative care" should read "and knowledge of the definition of palliative care"

Reply: We corrected the sentence as suggested (Line 230).

Comment 4: P7. lines 160-161 - I think there is some language confusion over the process of blinding the researchers to participant identity and the ethical concept of anonymity. In general, researchers are not anonymous as invitations to participate and cover letters on surveys often include researchers' names. I think what you are describing in this section is blinding although, given that this is not a RCT, there is no real benefit and it sounds like you could easily trace the identifier back to the participant identity if needed. I do not think the final sentence in that section adds anything - maybe consider aggregating the last 2 sentences - By means of a unique identification code, care staff that did not respond could be identified by the site contact person, who sent out the reminders (maximum 2) to non-responders. (This aligns better with your Response to Reviewers comments).

Reply: We corrected the sentence as suggested (Line 120-122: this paragraph was added to the participants section).

Lynn McCleary, PhD (Reviewer 3): I appreciate the revisions that were made. The authors had a native English speaker review the manuscript. I still find the description of participants confusing and think it makes sense to combine the section called participants and the paragraph However, there are still some instances of grammatical problems or lack of clarity and I advise a careful proof-reading. These are some of the problems but probably not all of them:

Reply: After having completed the requested revisions, an English language editing agency checked the manuscript for grammatical errors.
Comment 1: There is unusual use of brackets (determinants of) self-efficacy two places in the manuscript

Reply: We deleted the brackets

Comment 2: There is inconsistency plural/singular in reference to staff and it would be a good idea to double check when "staff" is being used collectively

Reply: We checked the paper for plural/singular in reference to care staff and changed it where needed.

Comment 3: The term "followed a palliative care training" is unusual and I think should be "completed palliative care training"

Reply: “Followed” was replaced by “completed”

Comment 4: Reporting SD when reporting mean

Reply: SD was added to the mean scores (Abstract, page 2, line 38; Results, page 9, line 220)

Comment 5: Inconsistent citation format

Reply: The authors assume this comment refers to the citations in the Methods section, page 4-5, line 101-105. “(Evenblij et al. 2016)” was replaced by “14” [the number of the citation] and we replaced “2016” after “see Van den Block et al” by “6” [the number of the citation].

Comment 6: Page 3, line 49 "it concerns"

Reply: The sentence was changed into: In the Netherlands, for example, it concerns approximately 35% of the people with a chronic condition die in long-term care settings annually.

Comment 7: Page 3, line 63 "two-fifths"
Reply: We corrected this.

Comment 8: Page 3, line 74, awkward sentence
Reply: We changed the sentence: Although, discussing the course of a disease or care preferences with a patient is generally seen as a task for physicians. However, these topics may equally well be discussed between nurses and residents once the resident has been informed by a physician or when the residents themselves bring them the issue up himself.

Comment 9: Page 4, line 76 "… are, therefore, in a …"
Reply: We corrected this as suggested.

Comment 10: Page 4, line 78 "… had been demonstrated to …"
Reply: We corrected this as suggested. (Line 79)

Comment 11: Page 6, last paragraph belongs with participants section
Reply: We integrated this paragraph into the participants section as suggested. (Line 117-125)

Comment 12: Page 6, line 137 to 138 sentence is confusing
Reply: We changed the sentence to clarify: Items were scored on a the original 5-point scale (ranging from completely agree to completely disagree) which was dichotomized for analyses into ‘agree’ (agree or (completely) agree) and ‘do not agree’ (disagree, (completely) disagree, and do not agree/disagree). (Line 143-145)

Comment 13: Page 6, line 146 "concerned" doesn't make sense to me in this context
Reply: We changed the sentence: This concerned Accordingly, 54 nurses/care assistants were excluded: (Line 155-156)
Comment 14: Page 8, line 204 "except" instead of "but"
Reply: But was replaced by except (Line 204)

Comment 15: Consider using the word control or controlling when referring to statistical control, rather than correction
Reply: Correction was replaced by control (Methods, page 7, line 167; Results, page 8, line 205 & page 9, line 216; Tables, page 18, line 466 & 19, line 472)

Comment 16: Page 9, line 215 remove "only"
Reply: “Only” was removed as suggested

Comment 17: Page 9, line 229 typo
Reply: “de” was replaced by “the”

Comment 18: Page 9, Lin 232 "on" is incorrect
Reply: “on” was replaced by “for”

Comment 19: Page 9, line 234 change and to or
Reply: “and” was replaced by “or”

Comment 20: Page 10, line 242 typo
Reply: “was” was deleted

Comment 21: Page 10, line 248, "reported to have insufficient time" is incorrect
Reply: We changed the sentence: Across the three settings around 60% of the care staff reported that the available time have is insufficient time to provide adequate appropriate care.