Author’s response to reviews

Title: "Small, small interventions. Big, big role." Patient, care-giver and health-care worker experiences of a palliative care programme in Kerala, India: a qualitative study

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Version: 1 Date: 13 Nov 2018

Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor,

We have uploaded a cleaner version of our manuscript. The file with track changes has been uploaded as a supplementary file as suggested by you. We once again thank you for the comments from your side and from the reviewers. We have tried to address the issues you have raised and have revised the results and discussion, including addition of new references. We have addressed all the comments and in turn thank the reviewers for strengthening our manuscript.

Thank you
Sincerely

Rekha Rachel Philip on behalf of the co-authors
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Please include, at minimum the names, institutions, countries and email addresses of all authors, and the full postal address of the submitting author in the Title page.

Title page stands modified. Email addresses of all authors have been inserted in title page.

Please note that the affiliation of Emilie Venables was spelled incorrectly on the system but is correct in the manuscript.

Manuscript stands modified. Email addresses of all authors have been inserted in title page.

Please change 'Introduction' to "Background".

Manuscript stands modified. Introduction has been changed to Background.

Please note that the Ethics Approval should be part of the Declaration Section.

Manuscript stands modified. Ethics Approval has been put under Declaration Section.

One of the co-authors is a native English speaker and has edited throughout. Previously we had not edited quotations as these were as spoken by the participants, but realise that some of them may be difficult to understand, thus have edited them more fully, without changing the meaning.

Please have your submission copy-edited by a native English-speaking colleague. If this is not possible, please consider using a professional service.

Throughout
Thank you for submission. I read this with interest and overall I find it a good example of reporting of a qualitative study. There are some relatively minor points (1 slightly more than minor) that I feel you could address.

1. The 'slightly more than minor' comment is that I think you need to review the way you present your sample and the use of Focus groups. You indicate in the abstract that you had one patient when in fact later you say 8 and you cannot do a focus group with one person. I think this is an issue of reporting more than anything but the way you describe it needs clarification.

2. You make a point that many of the patients are paraplegic but I am not sure why that is needed. I would add that the range of patients you report is quite different to the populations usually served by Western palliative care services. You could mention that?

Thank you for the encouraging words.

Patients who received palliative care from the centre included a wide range of conditions such as those with cancer, strokes, psychiatric illness, the aged, paraplegia and cerebral palsy. We have revised the statement to clarify this. The patients who participated in the interviews are also
given in line number 148-151. They were the those who were already familiar with the clinic through attending support group meetings and included patients with muscular dystrophy (n=3), hemiparesis (n=2), post polio paralysis (n=1), recurrent dislocation of hip (n=1) and psychosis in remission (n=1). We have also stressed that in Kerala, palliative care differs from that in other contexts, as is not only about end of life care.

3. You identify a lot of codes and if I am correct, three global themes. Can you add a couple of sentences which explain how you were able to reduce all the codes to these themes? Were there any sub-themes? There is a lot of data so it would be helpful to see the links in the analysis here.

4. On pg 14, I note that memos were taken (as reported). Can you mention that in the methods section?

5. Pg 4 line 76 - I think this should be 'the worlds population'
6. Pg 13, line 312 - I would just use the word 'aged'. Thank you. This sentence has been removed during review.

7. Pg 16, line 375 - Can you note who this quotation is from underneath the text as you have done with all the other quotations?
   Thank you. Manuscript stands modified. I have added the participant details in page 16, line 390.

8. My final comment is that there is a sense that this study is part of a larger evaluation of the Kerala service. I may be wrong, but if not, I think it is important to state that at the beginning.
   Thank you. It is part of a larger evaluation of the palliative care programme and quantitative results have been published elsewhere. We have added this in lines 103-105.

9. Overall, I think with a little revision, notably the sampling section, this is a very interesting paper.
   Thank you very much.

1. This is a small qualitative study that would appear to be part of an overall service evaluation. It is good practice to evaluate a service, especially one that has run for over 20 years. I would expect to see the latest qualitative evidence matched against previous qualitative studies.
   Thank you for the comment. 1. We have added the point that this study is part of a larger evaluation of palliative care services and the qualitative part has been presented in this paper. The
evaluations. There are several methodological issues in the presentation of data that render this manuscript of low standard in its current state. The quantitative component has been published elsewhere. We have tried to address your comments so that it meets your expectations.

2 The presentation of results requires review. There are several styles to presenting quotes/data from individuals; the best practice is to present a participant code or ID, in its current format there is far too much identifying information. I appreciate the sample sizes are small, especially for the nurses and doctors but every attempt should be made to anonymize data. The data is also very repetitious and the themes poorly presented and discussed. The use of existing literature is poorly cited and used and only a minimal reference base used Manuscript stands modified.

1. It is important to keep the demographics in as they are an important part of understanding who the quote is from and the context. We appreciate your comments, however, and where there are multiple quotes from the same person, have edited to reduce the amount of information. We do not feel that people can be identified by their quotations, but instead believe the additional information helps the reader to understand the background of the person speaking.

2. Repetitions of results have been removed from discussion

3. As in line with reviewer 1’s comments, we have explained the coding process in more detail.

3. Discussion has been modified with new references-6-9,26,27,31-35 Page 21-24

Changes made in Results in lines 278-284

Pages 9

Discussion has been modified

Lines701-703,709-710,783-786,859-861

Pages 17,18,19