Author’s response to reviews

Title: Development of an eHealth information resource for family carers supporting a person receiving palliative care on the island of Ireland.

Authors:

David Scott (david.scott@qub.ac.uk)
Peter Hudson (p.hudson@unimelb.edu.au)
Karen Charnley (kcharnley@aiihpc.org)
Cathy Payne (cpayne@aiihpc.org)
Gareth Westcott (gareth@olh.ie)

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Deepa

Reviewer 1 (Jennifer Tiernan) seems happy for us to proceed with publication and offered no suggested changes.

Reviewer 2 (John Allspop) seems broadly happy with the changes we have made to the manuscript and adds some additional points. John has requested a supplementary appendix that he feels would address his comments but as these are quite a broad mix of points (and in some cases are already addressed in the text) I am unsure what this supplementary appendix would look like.

The majority of John's queries relate to our 'Review of systematic reviews' - I have now added a sentence on line 153 stating that a copy of this review can be obtained on request from the first author. I felt that this was the best way to address this as the review is only a part of our submitted paper and I do not want to unbalance the paper. It also seems like the most transparent and comprehensive way to address queries around the review.

John also asks about the manner in which we sought agreement with the VRG and determined the websites themes and core content. In a section of the manuscript that begins on line 202 we...
describe the iterative process of providing a written summary, meeting to discuss content, audio recording these conversations, making detailed notes, developing action points and using this to form the basis of future meetings. I do not think we could add very much more detail to this so again, feel that a supplementary appendix is unnecessary and potentially duplicative.

John also mentions that we could use a supplementary appendix to discuss the involvement of the information scientist, the wider team involved, expertise and use of audio recording. Again, we feel this would duplicate parts of the existing manuscript as we discuss the information scientist on line 122, the wider team expertise on lines 85-100 and the use of audio recording in the section beginning on line 202. John further suggests that a supplementary appendix could provide some information on the 'magnitude of literature reviewed'. Again, we mention the number of reviews (n=19) on line 15 and state that we looked at an additional 28 key studies on line 192. We again feel that providing this information again in a supplementary appendix would be duplicative.

I am more than happy to create a supplementary appendix to address these points if you feel it is necessary but I am hoping that by offering to provide the readership with a full copy of the review that they will be convinced by the level of methodological rigour we employed. Again, I am more than happy to address John's other points in a supplementary appendix but I hope that I have illustrated that these points are, in the main, discussed in the existing text and I do feel that a supplementary appendix may be duplicative.

Please let me know if you would like me to create the appendix as suggested.

Many thanks for considering our paper.

Best wishes

David