Author’s response to reviews

Title: Music in palliative care: a qualitative study with patients suffering from cancer

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Version: 2 Date: 02 Jun 2019

Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor, Dear reviewer,

Thank you for reviewing our paper PCAR-D-18-00057 entitled “Music in palliative care: a qualitative study with patients suffering from cancer”. Please find attached our answer to the Editor’s and Reviewers’ comments and the revised version of the manuscript.

Thank you in advance for considering our work.

Sincerely yours,

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Editor comments:

1. Please change the Introduction heading to Background.

We changed the Introduction heading as suggested.

2. There is currently far too much information in Table 1 which may compromise the anonymity of the participants. Please refer to the participants by a mix of numbers and letters, not "Mrs ..." or "Mr ...". Please also remove the gender information, and present the ages as age ranges (e.g. 0-10, 11-20, 21-30 years old, etc.)

We made the requested changes.

3. In relation to the point above, please anonymise the quotes, using a mixture of numbers/letters to refer to the participants.

We made the requested changes, referring to the patients as P1, P2, etc.

4. Please provide a link to the laws/guidelines which you mention in the Ethics approval and consent to participate section, those which specify which ethics approval and consent was not required.

We added to the revised manuscript that the non-opposition of the patients to participate was written in the medical record, and included the requested link.

5. Please consider the list of authors as it currently stands with reference to our guidelines regarding qualification for authorship (http://www.biomedcentral.com/submissions/editorial-policies#authorship).

Currently, the contributions of authors JC, SS, CV, MF, CT and LH do not automatically qualify them for authorship. In the section “Authors’ contributions”, please provide further clarifications on their contributions, and see our guidelines for authorship below.

An 'author' is generally considered to be someone who has made substantive intellectual contributions to a published study. Authors are expected to fulfil the criteria below (adapted from McNutt et al., Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Feb 2018, 201715374; DOI: 10.1073/pnas.1715374115; licensed under CC BY 4.0):
Each author is expected to have made substantial contributions to the conception OR design of the work; OR the acquisition, analysis, OR interpretation of data; OR the creation of new software used in the work; OR have drafted the work or substantively revised it

AND to have approved the submitted version (and any substantially modified version that involves the author's contribution to the study);

AND to have agreed both to be personally accountable for the author's own contributions and to ensure that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work, even ones in which the author was not personally involved, are appropriately investigated, resolved, and the resolution documented in the literature.

Acquisition of funding, collection of data or general supervision of the research group, alone, does not usually justify authorship.

If these guidelines are not met, we would request the following change of authorship form be filled out and sent to our editorial office - https://resource-cms.springernature.com/springern-cms/rest/v1/content/7454878/data/v5

Anyone who contributed towards the article who does not meet the criteria for authorship can be acknowledged in the ‘Acknowledgements’ section.

We added details to ensure all authors are credited for their contribution.

Reviewer comments:

Karin Oechsle (Reviewer 1): The authors present a revised version of their qualitative study of a music and drama intervention in patients with advanced cancer on palliative care ward. After major revision, this manuscript has improved significantly. However, I’m still not sure if it does reach the high impact of BMC Palliative care has it exhibits several methodologic limitations and does not present to much new information.

However, it might be considered for publication by others reviewers. Then, at least, a comment on ethical approval and information and written consent of participants should be included.

Thank you for your review. We added details about the ethical and legal aspects of this study.

Isaac Chua (Reviewer 3): Strengths:

1) I appreciate the revisions that have been made since the original submission to strengthen the methodology section of the paper. As a result, it becomes easier to contextualize the actual intervention and how it led to some of the quotes engendered by the patients.
Limitations:

1) Please contextualize how your study's findings are unique from the prior findings in the literature. Although you have clarified that you simply want to describe the patients' experience of the music intervention, I'm not sure how your findings add to what is already known about music therapy in the palliative care setting. You have done a nice job of listing the evidence of prior studies that explain both the hypothetical and proven efficacy of music therapy. However, you only list these studies and do not explain how your results exist in relation to the preexisting evidence. Are they the same? Are they different? In other words, what makes your results special?

Thank you for your review. We added a comment in the conclusion to underline the main finding of this study.

2) Please reconsider what approach you are using for your qualitative study. Taking a grounded theory approach is a bold assertion for a small study. Moreover, it's not clear to me what is the new theory about "music in palliative care" you actually have generated. Simply describing the "lived experience" of patients who received this intervention is more consistent with a phenomenology approach as opposed to grounded theory. If you decide to assert that the study is attempting to generate a new theory about "music in palliative care," please be explicit about what theory that is exactly and how your coding supports this assertion.

We changed the approach to a phenomenological approach as suggested.