Author's response to reviews

Title: Improved quality and more attractive work by applying EBM in disability evaluations: a qualitative survey.

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Title: Improved quality and more attractive work by applying EBM in disability evaluations: a qualitative survey

Reply to REVIEWER COMMENTS ON REVISED MANUSCRIPT

Jan Hoving 23-10-2015

1. Although the authors have improved parts of the manuscript I still have a discomfort that everything does not yet come together well enough. It is related to the other reviewer’s comment that the “authors seem to lack a critical look at their own study topic”. It may also be linked to the fact that the study does not seem to have been framed within a particular theoretical framework that would have guided the study design, processes followed and the way in which the interpretation of data and the discussion is presented.

Reply: we thank the reviewer for the suggestions and comments. We have reviewed and accepted the reviewers track changes and made significant changes to the text of the manuscript, including a more critical look at our results using Coreq and RATs checklist. The Discussion section now includes a critical paragraph by adding and expanding on the limitations of our study. We excluded this partly in previous versions of the paper as the text was quite long. We also edited the results section into the past tense. Please see discussion.

2. Not that many of the 32 COREQ checklist questions are answered in the manuscript. There is also the RATS checklist used for appraising qualitative research manuscripts for BMC journals (http://www.biomedcentral.com/info/ifora/rats?layout=printer) and again there are pointers that could have been addressed.

Reply: See point 1. Using COREQ and RATS we added some methodological considerations: please see a new paragraph in the discussion section.

3. I was disappointed with the technical care of the manuscript. It was difficult to read because direct quotations were not indented, there were discrepancies in the way in which paragraphs were divided (e.g. some had a first-line indents and others not) and subheadings in the Results section were confusing. I created a Word document with track changes for the manuscript to indicate typing and spelling errors and other discrepancies in punctuation and formatting and to make suggestions for conforming more to the style in which qualitative studies are reported in BMC Medical Education. This document is added at the end of the comments list.

Reply: we thank the reviewer for his edits in the WORD document, which we used. We incorporated all edits in the manuscript, it is much better to read now.
Major revisions

Introduction

4. Reconsider the use of the term “opinions”. “Perceptions” is a more acceptable word to use.
   
   **Reply:** we have changed opinions with perceptions throughout the manuscript as suggested by the reviewer.

5. In the revised version it seems as if the second aim of the study, namely to use the feedback from the physicians to inform further improvement in future training and implementation of a more evidence-based disability evaluation practice in the Netherlands disappeared in the Introduction but remains in the Discussion section.

   **Reply:** the introduction was edited and the sentence the reviewer is referring to is now the last sentence of the introduction: “From the physicians’ answers we also hoped to learn on what aspects our future EBM training and implementation efforts could be improved.”. Thus the introduction and discussion are in line with one another.

Results

6. My comment in the previous review about the use of the present tense for findings from a study of limited scope that took place in the past has become more relevant now. One of the reasons why all the lines of argument do not yet gel sufficiently may be the use of past and present tense to present the results (e.g. the first paragraph in the subsection “Clients will benefit from the application of EBM” starts with the past tense). This may have contributed to the other reviewer’s view that the paper was on an "EBM missionary trip". If the findings had been written in the past tense one could have occasionally used phrases such as “participating physicians” or “participants” to ground the study in the ‘presence’ of the actual study.

   **Reply:** we follow the reviewers’ suggestions and have put all of the results in the past tense and added “participating physicians” throughout the text so its clearer these are study findings.

Discussion

The strengths and limitations subsection could be more substantial. The “strengths” actually relate issues of reliability/validation or trustworthiness. It should be indicated more clearly why this study was credible and how threats to reliability/validation or trustworthiness were minimized. Of concern may be the fact that the course tutors also acted as ‘interviewers’ and facilitators in the group and plenary discussions and it is not clear how reflexivity was applied to get substantial inputs beyond a more ‘feel-good’ outcome. Limitations also relate to the fact that a small group of physicians were involved in the study and that the findings of the study are not generalizable to all disability evaluators, although some of the findings may be transferable.
Reply: see point 2. We have added some methodological considerations in the form of strengths and limitations.

Language and formulation

7. If accepted for publication, the copy-editing team should pay attention to other relevant editorial conventions and the house style of the journal (e.g. use of single and double quotation marks, square or round brackets in verbatim quotations to clarify a word or phrase). It is also recommended that a language editor assist the authors with condensing some of the very wordy sentences.
   Reply: we have made some improvements as suggested by the reviewer, but are open for further improvements if desired.

Minor revisions

Methods

8. From the revised version it is not clear that this survey was done in the form of group discussions at the end of the training program to explore perceived motivators and preconditions. It is included in the abstract.
   Reply: a per reviewers suggestions we added extra information in the methods. We included “in the form of group discussions” and “to explore perceived motivators and preconditions” in different places in the methods section (paragraph on design and participants, and group discussions).

9. It seems as if there had been more than 45 participants in the intervention arm of the RCT. How were the 45 participants for this study sampled?
   Reply: we ran out of recording equipment so we arbitrarily stopped after randomly providing 9 groups with a recorder, missing 2 groups (we had 11 groups in total).

10. The terminology open, axial and selective coding are terms introduced by Corbin and Strauss (1990). I made a suggestion in the introductory sentence of this paragraph on page 6 of the track-changes manuscript to include an acknowledgement of the source Reference: Strauss AL, Corbin J. Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques. Newbury Park, AC: Sage; 1990.
   Reply: we follow the reviewers suggestion and have included the reference.

Discussion

11. A style issue: there is excessive use of “Shuval” and “Hugenholtz” that may ‘irritate’ the reader. Some suggestions for streamlining the text are included in the accompanying track-changes document.
Reply: we follow the reviewer’s suggestions and have used his/her suggestions to improve the text.

References

12. Add journal issue numbers in brackets after volume numbers where relevant.
13. See comments and corrections in the track-changes document.
Reply: we follow the reviewer’s suggestions and have used his suggestions to improve the text.

14. Editorial suggestions made on the track-changes document:
   - A couple of terminology suggestions made
   - Headings and subheadings made consistent
   - Indent the verbatim quotations
   - References for verbatim quotations from participants are normally placed at the end of the quotation and not before
   - When there are two quotations illustrating a point it is more reader friendly to give two quotations, one below the other instead of linking them with “and” or “And”.
   - Where direct quotations start as the beginning of a sentence the lower case has been made a capital
   - Mixture of UK and US spelling – made consistent for the US spelling

Reply: we follow the all of the reviewers suggestions and have used his/her suggestions to improve the text.