Author’s response to reviews

**Title:** COMMUNICATION SKILLS INTERVENTION: PROMOTING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN NURSES AND MECHANICALLY VENTILATED PATIENTS

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Authors’ response to reviews:

Reviewer 1: Carina Isabel Ferreira Martinho

The present study is now more complete and understandable. Congratulations

Reviewer 2: Mary Beth Happ
1. The authors were responsive to several reviewer comments, however some new errors and omissions are evident in the revision. Overall, the English grammar and word forms (e.g., singular/plural, present/past tense) have multiple errors and there are missing words throughout such that sentences are incomplete or don't make sense. A professional English language editor should review any further revision before submission.

The manuscript has been language edited.

2. References are incomplete and some citations are erroneous. This raises concern regarding misinterpretation or misuse of the literature.

References and citations corrected as requested.

3. The stated objective is: To assess USEFULNESS of a communication skill training intervention in promoting EFFECTIVE communication between nurses and mechanically ventilated patients.

The objective has been changed as suggested by the reviewer.

4. Methods:

This paper reports a qualitative analysis of ICU nurses' experience of a communication training program and AAC tools - perhaps from a larger quasi-experimental study (?) As described, this is not a quasi-experimental design (pretest-posttest?) Quasi-experimental design would include some comparison and quantitative outcome measurement. The paper does not seem to fully address the stated objective in that there is not a measure of communication effectiveness or program utility. The objective for this paper may be better framed as “to describe nurses' experience of a communication skills training intervention.”

Corrected as stated above.

5. The correct term is "convenience" sample rather than 'convenient' sample.

The methods section indicates that data were collected from 3 different data sources - transcripts of workshop training, nurse interviews, and field note observations of nurses applying the new knowledge and skills in practice. However, the analysis and results seem to be limited to the nurse interviews. Why mention the other data sources if these data are not reported in the results section?

Term changed as requested.

Other sources of data gathering has be deleted and left only the nurses interviews as indicated.

6. Results and Discussion:
I previously pointed out the similarities in the program as described in the Table 1 to the communication training program and AAC materials intervention developed and implemented in the Study of Patient-nurse Effectiveness with Assisted Communication Strategies (SPEACS) study. I also listed the references to that study with publicly available links. In this revision, the authors state that the role plays were based on developed scenarios that were adopted and adapted from reference #13 Rodriguez et al. 2012; however, the Rodriguez paper describes the development and evaluation of an electronic communication tool/device. There are no patient scenarios in the Rodriguez paper analogous to those in the table 1 and the intervention does not involve communication skills training for ICU nurses.

The statement on p 7, lines 4-7 that "Studies [10, 11]. have shown that short communication interventions are helpful in enhancing communication skills among nurses working with ventilated patient" incorrectly references a book (reference #11) that contains a chapter (Chapter 2 "AAC in Intensive Care Units," Garrett, K.L., Happ, M.B., Costello, J., & Fried-Oken, M) in which components of the SPEACS intervention are described but there are no study results published in that chapter. The correct reference would be the SPEACS study results published in Happ, Garrett, et al, Heart & Lung, 2014; 43(2):89-98 (available online at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24495519)

The reference was removed and it was replaced with SPEACS study as suggested by reviewer

7. Reference #7 reports results from the usual care /non-intervention cohort NOT the results of the SPEACS intervention, so reference #7 is incorrectly cited in the discussion section on page 15, line 2. The 2014 paper in Heart and Lung should be referenced instead. There is no comparison between the SPEACS study and the study described in this paper - how is the intervention conducted in Botswana similar or different to the SPEACS intervention? This is important for readers who may want to implement and evaluate such a program to know.

Reference replaced with Happ et al 2014 as suggested

8. The following statement and reference on Page 14 is confusing, "Although evaluation of communication training in this study was qualitatively done, the findings are supported by [18] in the UK on nurses perceptions about communication with ventilated patients which showed change after training" Reference #18 is a citation about communication training for oncologists.

Sentence removed and Reference 18 replaced

Important constructs of time ("it takes more time"), challenges of yearly nurse rotation and need for management support are embedded in the nurses' comments and may be worthy of separate a theme (Operational challenges) or better placed within existing themes. As recommended in the previous review, the experiences and feedback from the ICU nurses in Botswana regarding communication skills training should be compared with the literature reporting on the feedback from nurses who participated in SPEACS training in the USA (Radtke et al, 2012 Intensive Crit
Nurses support made into a separate theme

Botswana compared with SPEACS finding as indicated

9. Limitations:

The use of multiple sources of data collection to ensure validity and credibility is not a limitation. This statement belongs in methodology section. How was saturation determined? That should also be in the methods section. If you can show how/why saturation was achieved - no new themes or patterns in the responses from nurses - then you do not need to comment on sample size.

Limitation of the study has been reworded.