Author’s response to reviews

Title: Using information and communication technologies to involve patients and the public in health education in rural and remote areas: a scoping review

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Version: 3 Date: 04 Dec 2018

Author’s response to reviews:

Quebec, December 4, 2018

Maria Elisabeth Johanna Zalm, Ph.D.

BMC Health Services Research

Dear Dr Zalm:

Please let us begin with apologizing for the delay in resubmitting our manuscript. The editor responsible for finalizing the paper was ill last week and unable to finish. We understand this may delay the publication and hope it will still be considered as we have undertaken major revisions to improve the clarity and quality of the manuscript. Please find attached our revised manuscript entitled “Using information and communication technologies to involve patients and the public in health education in rural and remote areas: a scoping review” for publication in BMC Health Services Research.

The present manuscript reports the results of a scoping review whose objective was to explore information and communication technologies (ICT) used for patient and public involvement (PPI) in health education programs in rural and remote areas. Our results suggest that the main ICTs used were telephone and Internet, followed by teleconference, electronic health record, and weblogs (n=1). No study measured the effectiveness of ICT for involving patients in health education in rural and remote areas.
We thank the reviewers for their thoughtful comments, questions and insights to improve the quality of our paper. To this end, we have modified our manuscript as follows below:

1. We clarified our definition of PPI in the Introduction and included the rationale for using such an approach. This can be found on page 3; line 8-18

2. We modified the abstract to better convey our ideas and PPI as a concept. These changes can be found on page 2; line 2-5.

3. We removed any citations from the abstract.

4. We apologize for the lack of clarity regarding the eligibility criteria. We clarified the section. These modifications can be found on page 6; line 11-17

5. We modified the Methods section and reduced the reporting of our process to a few paragraphs as advised by the reviewers. Please find the revised section on page 5; line 3 – page 8; line 2

6. We improved the quality of the Discussion section and how the results answered our questions. This can be found starting on page 8; line 13.

7. To the reviewer’s question, only our first question was answered: (1) What ICT are currently being used to facilitate PPI in health education in rural areas? We found no evidence to answer our second question: 2) How effective is the use of ICT for PPI in health education in rural areas?

8. In addressing these comments, we undertook major revisions of our paper to improve the quality of our paper as was requested by the editor and the reviewers. All changes are tracked in the most recent version of the manuscript. We hope this most recent version will meet the wishes of the reviewers and editors.

The manuscript is not under consideration for publication elsewhere and no paper related to this study has been published. Each author contributed significantly to this study and declare no conflicts of interest. All authors have approved the enclosed manuscript.

Thank you for considering our manuscript for publication in BMC Health Services Research. We look forward to your response. If there are any questions regarding the manuscript, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
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Enclosure