Author’s response to reviews

Title: Using narratives to impact health policymaking: A systematic review

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Author’s response to reviews:

February 4, 2019

To: Rosanna Gonzalez-Mcquire
Managing Editor
Health Research Policy and Systems

From: Elie Akl
Professor
American University of Beirut

Subject: Response Letter

Manuscript Title: “Using narratives to impact health policymaking: A systematic review (HRPS-D-18-00168R1)

Dear Dr. Gonzalez-Mcquire,

Thank you for the potential acceptance of the above referenced manuscript for publication in Health Research Policy and Systems. Kindly find below a response to the Editor and a description of the changes made to the manuscript. We hope you find them satisfactory.
First, because of the selective nature of narratives, narrators may omit details of a story or exaggerate it, so the story may not be representative of the larger reality (for example, the case of childhood cancer where optimistic “cure” or “hope” stories were selectively used that ignored the negative realities). Second, the reliance on narratives without scientific evidence may lead policymakers to adopt policies that may be ineffective or even harmful or waste resources (for example, the case of reimbursing a therapy for breast cancer that was later proven to be ineffective). Third, narratives may produce biased results based on the views of one or a select number of individuals (for example, the case of discontinuing morcellator use). Because of the affective nature of narratives, policymakers may give higher priority to diseases with more tragic stories such as cancer and HIV at the expense of other diseases with similar or higher burden such as cardiovascular diseases (36, 61).