Author's response to reviews

Title: Dealing with the death of a long term patient; what is the impact and how do podiatrists cope?

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Prof Borthwick,

Re: Manuscript ID JFAR-D-17-00073 Dealing with the death of a long term patient; what is the impact and how do podiatrists cope?

All changes to the manuscript in the resubmit version have been highlighted in red font.

Please find below the responses to reviewers. We appreciate this opportunity to re-submit.

REVIEWER 1:

1) I firstly found a research methods/ology that embraces the 'lived experiences' of a phenomena and trying to draw assumptions against a BRS and MBI quite jarring and conflicts with the associated epistemology and ontology of IPA. There is also very very limited defence of using BRS or MBI. In association with this approach, I did feel that quantitative paradigms are attempting to be tied into this qualitative approach, which purely has the participants at the centre of the lived experience. I feel that this doesn't work particularly as the authors do not tie this neatly together in the discussion or conclusion- I therefore feel that BRS and MBI needs to be removed in order to move the publication of this paper forward. If you were to embrace this approach you need to consider this as a qualiquantitative study- use thematic analysis and BRS/MBI.

Response: We agree that the purpose of this element of the study wasn’t clearly articulated within the manuscript. Therefore we have provided further information within the manuscript on the use of the BRS/MBI. This was particularly relating to the use of these tools as a screener to ensure there were no participants with extreme scores participate within the study.

This has been further discussed in the methodology and in the limitations.
2) Consider if this work is perhaps descriptive phenomenology? It could be noted that more IPA/phenomenological literature is needed to defend the chosen approach.

Response: This is a valid point and we agree that additional discussion within the methodology section is needed to support this chosen approach. As such further information has been applied in support of the IPA methodology. The authors strongly believe we have adhered to the principles of IPA. We have additionally met with a more experienced researcher in qualitative research methodology including IPA (AM) who has provided advice in the methodology and analysis.

3) Number of Participants- this study could have been undertaken with 8 participants according to Smith, Flowers and Larking, 2009. A defence or reference is needed to support the decision to interview 15 people.

Response: An additional reference has been provided in support of the sample size. Additionally, the full number of participants who expressed an interest and those who were actually interviewed was included.

References supporting this sample size include:


4) Telephone interviews- I wonder how you really embrace and explore the lived experiences of participants this way. Have you found evidence to support this approach? How deeply can you really explore a lived experience over the telephone? What about body language, eye contact etc? I feel that you could do this with thematic analysis, not with IPA.

Response: Evidence has been provided within the manuscript supporting this approach. This is particularly in relation to discussing sensitive topics. We believe this is particularly relevant in a small profession and where the researchers may be known to the participants through conference presentations or research work. This method of data collection also ensured regional representation across Australia and therefore practitioners who presumably trained at different universities.

Additionally, during transcription, notes were made regarding pauses, laughter or audible crying within the interview. This was to aid in analysis.

Additional references in support of this approach have been included:


5) Smith, flowers and Larkin suggest that there are 6 steps to analysing IPA data- this could one of the reasons that the data isn't interpretive in association with IPA as an analytical tool.

Response: The authors believe that we have adhered to the described data analysis approach outlined by Smith, Flowers and Larkin. The six steps suggested by Smith, Flowers and Larkin are:

1) Reading and re-reading
2) Initial noting
3) Developing emergent themes
4) Searching for connections across emergent themes
5) Moving to the next case (reviewing one transcript then moving to the next)
6) Looking for patterns across cases

The approach taken in this study involved undertaking all of the above steps but steps 3 & 4 and steps 5 & 6 were written in the manuscript combined together. As such we believe we have demonstrated an IPA data analysis approach in line with the reference cited.

6) Although the data presented is really interesting and explores the described experience under investigation, I do feel that this is descriptive rather than interpretive in line with a Husserlian or Heideggerian approach. In reviewing this work I was looking for symbolism, linguistic interpretation, simile, metaphor or abstract approaches to interpretation- in my search I failed to find these. This continued to reinforce my belief that this work is thematic analysis rather than IPA.

Response: We understand how the reviewer may have come to this conclusion due to the limited detailed within the methodology section of the manuscript. However we strongly believe that the study has been undertaken in line with the principles of IPA. The interpretative approach taken in this study was aligned to the philosophical teachings of Heidegger where one moves towards interpreting the lived experiences of people’s relationship with the world through unique perspectives and meanings aligned with a hermeneutic approach.
To address these concerns, further detail, including further references has been provided within the manuscript such as:

- greater detail on the underpinning philosophical stance;
- the inclusion of a table providing the subordinate themes to demonstrate linguistic interpretation,
- linking the concept of ideography to the data analysis; and
- greater discussion on the trustworthiness including the reflexive practices used.

7) Did the data only produce superordinate themes? In an IPA study you would need subordinate themes to support the overarching superordinate themes interpreted from the data. I would also suggest that the themes produced do not appear to embrace the interpretive phenomenological approach to the presentation of data.

Response: We agree that subordinate themes should have been included within the manuscript. To rectify this, Table 2 has been added to the study which highlights the subordinate themes extracted during the data analysis.

REVIEWER 2:

1) The inclusion of data collection around burnout and resilience seems unnecessary and adds a complication to the study which adds little to the discussion. Indeed the inclusion of these concepts, which have large volumes of research around them which have not been touched on in this paper, implies there may be a relationship between them and the results of the interviews. No such relationship was reported or explored.

Response: Please see Reviewer 1’s response on the similar issue regarding these measures and their use as an inclusion/exclusion.

2) The study design is reported as being a phenomenological approach, and a brief superficial explanation of this is given. However, the method of data collection (by telephone) and the nature of the questions participants were asked ('guided to talk about...', 'additional probing questions...to encourage elaboration...') are not commensurate with phenomenology.

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis is an approach to qualitative research which uses three key concepts: phenomenology, hermeneutics, and ideography. In IPA the principles are that humans express their world through language and relationships, and texts need to be deeply analysed and interpreted for the authors' to be able to make meaning of the participants' experience. The authors would also have needed to be reflexive in their analysis and identify where they placed themselves in the research, and acknowledged their own lens of the subject. This is not the approach these authors have taken and therefore cannot be called IPA.
The work does however have the makings of a good thematic analysis, and should they want to rewrite it using this qualitative approach to data analysis, it would become a more robust paper and contribute to the thesis around preparation for the death of patients in care.

Response: We agree that more detail is needed within the methodology and methods sections to further clarify how we went about this particular IPA study.

Further detail has been provided within the manuscript to support the design of this study in line with IPA.

In respects to the use of telephone interviews as a mean of data collection, please see Reviewer’s I response on the similar issue with supporting references for this approach.

Further detail regarding the approach within the semi-structured interviews has also been provided within the manuscript to clarify the nature of questions asked.

We strongly believe that this study has been undertaken adhering to the principles of IPA, as such further detail has been provided on the underpinning philosophy including phenomenology, hermeneutics and ideography, with supporting references. Additional information has been provided on the steps taken within the study to demonstrate trustworthiness, including reflexivity. The inclusion of this additional information, we believe demonstrates that this research was designed as an IPA study rather than a thematic analysis.