Author’s response to reviews

Title: Physical activity promotion in daily exercise therapy: The perspectives of exercise therapists in German rehabilitation settings

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Ms. Fong, dear Ms. Harrison, dear Mr. Cabri,

Thank you very much for reading and reviewing our manuscript. And many thanks for the opportunity to revise and resubmit our manuscript. All changes have been highlighted by the use of the MS-Word 'track changes-mode' in the revised version of the manuscript.

Answer to Ms. Harrison (Reviewer 1):

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript. I have provided comments for your consideration.

—> Dear Ms. Harrison, Thank you very much for your evaluation. We appreciate the time you've invested. Your valuable comments have helped us a lot to improve our manuscript.

Introduction

1. In the first paragraph please specify the population whose PA levels you are referring to. Is it the general public or people with health conditions i.e. COPD.

—> Thank you for that remark. We have specified the population and pointed out that this is only an example for people with a health condition (Background section, line 57-60, page 3).
Method

2. Please consider the use of a checklist for reporting qualitative research.

—> Thank you for that important remark. We have now based our reporting on the COREQ-checklist. A corresponding reference can be found in the methods section (line 123-124, page 6). Based on the COREQ list, we have mainly specified the section "Design and implementation" (line 144-162, page 7) and "Data sources and data analysis" (line 183-199, page 8-9).

3. Please include a brief sentence describing your reasons for dividing the focus groups into disease specific areas of expertise? Considering the prevalence of multi-morbidity in chronic disease populations I wonder if this was necessary.

—> The division of focus groups into disease-specific groups represents a special feature of German rehabilitation, namely the implementation of rehabilitation in disease-specific clinics. In addition, this disease specific approach should avoid potentially large differences in the issue of physical activity promotion in people with different diseases (e.g. between a person after a hip operation and a person after a heart attack). We included a brief explanation on this topic (Methods section, line 137-140, page 6). [Side note: interestingly enough, there is a lively discussion in Germany as to whether, due to the existing multi-morbidity in people with chronic conditions, the disease-related implementation of rehabilitation is actually the best form of organization.]

4. Page 7, line 143: how was the question(s) asked in the focus groups derived?

—> We have added an explanation on how this question was derived (Methods section, line 159-162, page 7).

5. Please provide more detail about the focus groups. For example where were they held, how long did they last etc.

—> We have now described this part of the methodology in more detail (Methods section, line 144-149, page 7).

6. Please specify who was responsible for facilitating the focus groups and reflect on their professional background, training and relationship with those participating in the focus groups.

—> We have also clarified these aspects of the methodology (Methods section, line 149-151, page 7).
7. Did the focus group participants know each other, if yes please reflect on how this could have influenced their responses.

—> The participants of the workshops came from all over Germany and most of them did not know each other before the focus group discussion. This information has been added (Methods section, line 170-172, page 8).

8. Please specify who was involved in each stage of the analysis.

—> We have added the names of the people involved in each analysis (Methods section, line 183-190, page 8).

Results

9. Please comment on the fact that there was greater agreement in the orthopaedic focus group than in the addiction focus group. Why do you think this was? This could be a discussion point.

—> Thank you for this comment. During the revision of this note, we noticed that we made a mistake here. In the original version of the manuscript we had accidentally reported the kappa coefficients of the focus groups of the second workshop day. We have corrected this now (Methods section, line 189-191, page 8). Please excuse our mistake.

In addition to this correction, we have taken up a possible cause for the different kappa coefficients in the discussion (Discussion, line 650-655, page 27-28).

10. Can you please specify if you are describing results from each individual focus group or if findings from the focus groups have been compared and contrasted (add to methods). At times, you describe findings "in relation to" specific focus groups. Does this mean this topic was only raised in this particular focus group or is this just an example (e.g. pg 11, line 252). Please make this clear throughout the results section.

—> Thank you for this important comment. We specified our analytical approach and clarified the relation between disease-specific and general analysis in the Method section (Methods section, line 193-199, page 9). Additionally, we explained this topic once at the beginning of the Results section (line 205-209, page 9) and clarified this throughout the results (eg, line 225, page 8 or line 281, page 12).

Discussion

11. Page 22, line 518 and page 26, line 623: please replace the word "prove" with "demonstrate" or a word to that effect.
Answer to Mr. Cabri (Reviewer 2):

Excellent manuscript. Although qualitative studies are not my specialty, I congratulate the authors for a well written and clear article!

Dear Mr. Cabri, Thank you very much for reading and reviewing our article. We kindly appreciate the evaluation of our article.

Additional comment to the editor Ms. Fong:

We know that Open access publishing is not without costs; unfortunately, the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg will only cover the costs if they are less than 2000 Euro (including VAT). Therefore, we would like to ask for a discount of 110 Euro on the price of 1790 Euro if our manuscript is accepted for publication.

We are looking forward to the final decision on our manuscript.

Kind regards,

Wolfgang Geidl