Author’s response to reviews

Title: An integrative review on methodological considerations in mental health research – design, sampling, data collection procedure and quality assurance

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Version: 2 Date: 15 Jul 2019

Author’s response to reviews:

Editors comments - P. 5, line 25-28: It makes no sense to mention the opposite of the inclusion criteria in the exclusion criteria. This is redundant information. The exclusion criteria are meant to further reduce the publications selected in first instance according to the inclusion criteria. So, please clarify, give other exclusion criteria or delete.

Authors response - In relation to the reviewer's query, the authors have revised the exclusion criteria section for clarity. The authors have reported that the excluded articles are based purely on general health services with no connection to mental health research. In particular, papers based purely upon non-methodological issues. The excluded articles also include general health services or clinical effectiveness of a particular intervention or treatments. Other general exclusion criteria were book chapters, conference abstracts, papers that present opinion, editorials, commentaries and clinical case reviews.

Editors comments - P. 6, line 1-9: Please, also give the identified keywords and index terms that resulted out of the initial search in Medline and Embase and that were used for the search in the remaining five databases.

Authors response - In relation to the reviewers query, the authors have presented the identified keywords and index terms that were used to search across all the databases. The keywords and index terms are (“psychiatry” OR “mental health” OR “mental disorders” OR “mental patient” OR “mental illness” OR “mental treatment” OR “consumer”) AND (“research methods” OR “methodology” OR “research designs” OR “qualitative research” OR “quantitative research” OR “mixed methods” OR “biomedical research” OR “health service research” OR “epidemiologic methods” OR “behavioural research” OR “process design”) AND (“sampling” OR “sample size” OR “patient selection” OR “surveys” OR “questionnaires” OR “interviews” OR “data analysis” OR “content analysis” OR “thematic analysis” OR “reporting”) AND (“quality assurance” OR “reliability” OR “validity” OR “techniques” OR “strategies” OR “informed consent”). More
importantly, the authors have presented search strategy and selection procedure in a table (see Table 1)

Editors comments --P6 line 1-26: Please make one integrated paragraph of the search and selection procedure, clearly mentioning the different phases, acts and actors, and references to figure 1 (Use the same terms in text and figure 1 – identification, screening, eligibility, etc…- so that the flow can easily be followed by the reader).

Authors response - The authors have addressed the editors’ query regarding the need to present one integrated paragraph of the search and selection procedure.

Editors comments --P. 8, table 1: What is the difference between ‘Mixed Methods (Qualitative and Quantitative)’ and ‘Mixes Methods’?

Authors response -The authors have revised the table 1 for consistency regarding the use of mixed methods.

Editors comments - -P. 9, table 2: it is not so clear what made you choose these themes and sub-themes. For example, why also not “Quantitative study in mental health research” as theme? Can you give some explanation why you choose these specific themes and sub-themes? It would also be contributing to the readability when you could start with an overview of the themes (with a short explanation of each theme), before discussing each theme (and sub-themes) more in detail in the different following paragraphs.

Authors response - The authors acknowledge the query by the editor. The authors wish to clarify that the themes were developed based on the coding framework. The common codes that were identified from the extracted data were grouped into sub-themes. The sub-themes were then categorized into themes. The authors acknowledge the need to include “Quantitative study in mental health research”. However, the authors wish to express that this theme was not identified from the coding (extracted data). There was no direct codes that relate to Quantitative study in mental health research. Notwithstanding this, the methodological issues that aligned to quantitative study have been thoroughly explained under the respective theme. In addition, the authors have responded to the reviewers query by presenting a short explanation of each theme.

Editors comments --P. 20 line 2-6: you mention only 4 of the 5 major themes (see Table 2)

Authors response - The authors acknowledge the query by the editor. The authors have revised the section for clarity and consistency in the discussion of the themes. The authors have introduced the theme that discussed the “qualitative methods in the mental health research”
Editors comments - -Reviewer 2 (3 in your revision) asked for a revision of the English language. How did you respond to this question (eg. P.7, line 13: ‘The data was synthesis using content analysis’) ? Can you please read the whole text and revise the language where necessary?

Authors response - In relation to the editors’ query, the authors have extensively and carefully revise the manuscript to address the English language.