Author’s response to reviews

Title: Psychosocial Support for Parents of Extremely Preterm Infants in Neonatal Intensive Care: A Qualitative Interview Study

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor,

We would greatly appreciate receiving your final decision on our manuscript as soon as possible. If we do not hear from you within a month, we will have to consider withdrawing our manuscript. The review process has already been much longer than expected (to date, eight months), and we are very reluctant to prolong it further.

Please find our responses to the reviewers' comments below.

RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS

Reviewer reports:
Anabela Araujo Pedrosa, Ph.D (Reviewer 3): The authors addressed all the comments and suggestions made previously, which resolved the concerns raised in the first review of this manuscript. Furthermore, they've clarified some terms and definitions used. The "Results" and specially the "Discussion" sections, following comments from other reviewers, where substantially shortened, and that makes them clearer and more focused on the objectives defined for this paper. This version is, therefore, of greater quality and pertinence. If published, it will add relevant information to this field of knowledge, but more importantly it draws significant implications for practice among health professionals working with this potentially vulnerable population (that are stated throughout "Discussion" and "Conclusion" sections).

ANSWER Thank you for your favourable evaluation of our manuscript in its present form.

Margarida C. Custódio Santos, PhD (Reviewer 4): Congratulations, this new version is far more explicit and much easier to read. You have achieved to be more concise without losing important information.

At this moment I will suggest only minor reviews
Please consider the following suggestions

Line 132 - "This interview study therefore aimed to answer the following questions". Consider rephrasing into "This study aimed to answer the following questions"

ANSWER: We have removed the word “interview”.

Line 216- (…) "about how the parents were feeling. But emotional support could also be transmitted through". Consider removing the word "But"

ANSWER: We have revised the sentences quoted in order to make the connection between them clearer.

Line 281 -282" (…) The participants also expressed a need for emotional support from staff in the form of an empathic and humane style of communication, irrespective of what was being talked about. Consider rephrasing. The expression "what is being talked about" is confusing.

ANSWER: We have changed it to “irrespective of what the topic of conversation was”.

Line 307- 308 "(…) social support that many participants described as valuable, sometimes indispensable, was that offered by other parents on the unit. Consider adding "was the one offered by …"

ANSWER: "the one offered by" in this context would not be consistent with correct English usage. However, we have reworded the sentence to make it simpler and clearer.

Line 309-310 (…) often described as something that had to be experienced to be fully understood, and this understanding could be found in other parents." Consider the sentence

ANSWER: We do not know what exactly the reviewer objects to in the sentence, since it is not specified in the reviewer’s comment. We have revised the sentence to make it clearer and better worded.

Line 623 (...) Some participants in our study expressed the opinion that identifying parents in need of professional psychological help is outside the purview of nursing staff." Is not fully understood what you mean by "purview". I recommend to be more explicit

ANSWER: The definition of "purview" is "The range or limit of authority, competence, responsibility, concern, or intention" (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary). This is exactly what the word means in the sentence that the reviewer queries.

Moreover, your study provides important data on the parental need for "trust". Trust is an a complex, important and difficult issue in health care. It would enrich your paper if the need for trust was further considered in the discussion of your results.
ANSWER: In the previous two revisions, the reviewers required us to shorten the discussion substantially, which we did. We have now added text to the discussion to clarify the implications of the problem areas we identified for parental trust (lines 647 and following). It should be noted that this whole section of the discussion (Nurses need adequate working conditions to respond to parents’ needs) already concerns factors affecting parental trust in the health care provider (as indicated in lines 641-645), although the word "trust" itself occurs only twice. We chose to highlight organizational factors impacting parental trust because this perspective has seldom been emphasized in previous studies.