Author’s response to reviews

Title: Educational content and challenges encountered when training service user representatives as peer researchers in a mixed study on patient experience of hospital safety

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Version: 1 Date: 17 Dec 2019

Author’s response to reviews:

The authors thank the editors and reviewers for the quality of their comments. Despite the article’s apparent weaknesses, the authors viewed these comments as a sign of interest for the proposal.

All comments on form and on English usage were taken into account: typos, spelling mistakes and unfortunate phrases were corrected. Suggestions made by reviewer n°1, such as replacing “rhythm” with “pace”, were also taken into account. We thank her for taking the time to give these notes.

We will now offer answers regarding the proposal’s scientific content (all heavy modifications are highlight in green in the text).

Comments 1 and 2) The reviewers suggested that we add a diagram illustrating the particular moments during which the challenges appeared, or that we add a column to the table detailing the training program.

□ We attempted to do this, but finally decided to present the information in the body of the article.

Comment 3) We were asked to indicate more clearly how our article proposal contributed to the field, and to specify the elements that augmented existing evidence, ie. how it furthered our understanding of the processes of educating patient researchers.

□ We created a table in which we presented our main observations.

Comment 4) We were asked whether highly experienced trainers were needed for all phases of the study.
We are unable to answer this question, since we did not call on trainers who were less experienced during the process.

Comment 5) Since we had stated that we would define the profiles of the peer researchers in our research objectives, we were asked about the peer researchers’ key characteristics and about the criteria we used to identify them.

This comment led us to remove this point from our research objectives, as the research protocol was not built to answer that question. However, we did make some proposals based on empirical evidence and added them to the “main observations” table.

Comment 6) We were asked to describe the study’s limitations.

We added a “limitations” sub-section in which we indicated that the study’s main limitations are its descriptive and empirical nature.

The first reviewer also regretted that a triangulation had not been conducted with the peer researchers to gather their opinions on the training.

The section “III-2 Evaluation” was added to include their opinions. After each training session, the peer researchers were surveyed and asked how their feelings of competency evolved and how useful each session was to them.

The first reviewer also regretted that some of the phrases were too judgmental and she insisted on the value of this type of research.

The fact that we had focused on the encountered challenges in the article proposal meant that other researchers could feel discouraged from attempting similar studies. Since this was not our intention at all, we added a paragraph on the benefits of the research. Since the article focused on the training program and not on the research itself, we illustrated this point with an example that shows that the academic researchers also had something to learn from the peer researchers. In this way, the training program can be seen as a two-way process.