

1/16/07 Response to Reviewer Comments

We are grateful for the thoughtful (and thought-provoking) reviewer comments. The manuscript has been enriched by their suggestions.

Reviewer # 1 comments are not posted.

Reviewer # 2:

- Title: See new title. The manuscript is now consistent in terminology by always comparing the parental illness representation to the “professional model” (as captured by the Expert Panel recommendations) rather than “professionals” (who admittedly might have their own illness representations). Expert Panels, by the nature of their composition should represent the most accepted and cohesive set of professional recommendations in a particular content area as they have been entrusted by their peers to represent them.
- Abstract and text has been revised to indicate direction; strength of the relationship is indicated by the p value.
- Conceptual Model: Good idea to introduce it earlier, and actually all of its components are mentioned in the introduction –information from health care provider (formal education), information from family and friends (informal advice , # of family members with asthma) illness history (child’s symptom report, duration) and health care provider relationship.
- Design: See comments on p. 4 related to how sample size was determined.
- The reviewer has a concern about the method of analysis and perhaps the use of the term “structural.” We regard the model as a system of simultaneous equations but not having latent variables or a measurement component. In earlier days, the structural terminology was used for such models; recently, it has perhaps become more limited in some disciplines to models with latent variables. We are happy to adopt whatever terminology the journal prefers but thought we were clear in describing the simultaneous equations and methods of estimation. Our having considered full-information methods of estimation taking account of correlations of errors across equations, in our thinking, makes the models structural. In the end, we concluded that the ordinary least squares (OLS) estimates were more stable than the full information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimates while leading to the same essential interpretations of the data. Note to Editor: If you feel this continues to be problematic to your readers with the changes made to the manuscript we can refer to the models as simultaneous equation models.

- The reviewer also writes “Figure 1 (which is actually a table) suggests that the outcome is categorical or ordinal, but the statistical models appear to treat this variable as continuous.” In preliminary work, we did spend considerable effort in examining the variable as ordinal and polytomous, reaching the conclusion that it is sufficiently quantitative to justify treating it as normally distributed in the models.
- Presentation of results: I would prefer to keep Table 3 (now 4) as it is. I believe it gives a succinct summary of what the greatest problem areas are for parents with elaboration and examples presented in the text. Text related to Table 4 (p14-15) now reflects recommendations related to the abstract made by the same reviewer and I think helps considerably with clarity and interpretation.
- Conclusions: Carey reference. Update has been added (but the 1986 reference is really the seminal piece in terms of cognitive science)
- Typos etc: All have been fixed

Reviewer # 3:

- Description of asthma duration is reported on p. 11, and its impact (which was not significant) is reported in Table 5.
- Interviewer’s background – See p. 5. Interviewers were carefully trained. Also the nature of the interview (semi-structured) provided a fair amount of structure to the interview protocol.
- Risk score: See comments for Reviewer #1
- Alternative therapies were not part of the original study design, but a doctoral student working with the team did add a section for her dissertation work exploring alternative treatment strategies that families with asthma utilized. These results will be reported elsewhere.

Reviewer # 4

- Risk score: See prior comments
- We have added references for statistical methods and the software used in the analysis.

Check List for style: Corrections have been made