Dear Dr. Moscrop

# BMJ-2019-051483 entitled "If social determinants of health are so important, shouldn’t we ask patients about them?"

We had a chance to review your appeal. There is considerable hesitation about inviting a resubmission. That said, we understand your passion on this topic and have agreed to look at a new article that reflects these three points:

1. Bring on a patient co-author. Feelings were so strong here and we weren’t compelled by your article that a single patient co-author wouldn’t be representative. The point is not to claim your proposal is approved by patients everywhere; rather, it’s about inclusion and walking the walk.

2. Many editors felt the piece needed trimming because the writing often felt more wordy than necessary. One example is the intro: the relationship between social determinants and health will be widely appreciated by many readers already, so this could be significantly streamlined. Please try to streamline the argument and piece throughout.

3. With respect to your hesitation to the notion of spelling out a practical plan for how your idea can be incorporated into practice, we think your article should put down some ideas, not presented as anything definitive, but rather to give some sense of how it might play out. You can point to the need for more research in this area, but you should at least offer an opening bid of an idea for others to begin debating. We weren’t compelled by the argument that first we need to get the idea on the table, then we can debate the details about how to do it. As stated, the notion that social determinants are linked to health is likely already on the table for most readers, so you still have work to do to explain your thoughts on the implementation of your idea into practice.

We recognise that responding to these points, and those of the reviewers, may amount to a new paper. It’s important to stress here that we really cannot make any promises about eventual publication, and that even if you do undertake all this work we may still not wish to take the paper forward, so if you prefer to take the paper in its current format elsewhere, we would understand.

If you do wish to resubmit a revised paper amended in the light of our and the reviewers’ comments, please use the resubmission link below. When submitting your revised manuscript please provide a point by point response to our comments and those of any reviewers. I must stress that resubmitting your manuscript does not guarantee eventual acceptance, and that your resubmission may be sent again for review.

Best wishes,
Peter Doshi
Associate Editor, The BMJ