Author's response to reviews

Title: Knowledge and attitudes towards complementary and alternative medicine among medical students in Turkey

Authors:

hülya akan (hakan@yeditepe.edu.tr)
güldal izbir (gizbirak@yeditepe.edu.tr)
elif ç kaspar (ecaltunok@yeditepe.edu.tr)
çiğdem apaydin (cigdemapaydin@yahoo.com)
serpil aydın (serpilden@yahoo.com)
nejat demircan (nejat_demircan@yahoo.com)
gamze erten (pagaerten@hotmail.com)
cahit özzer (cahitozer@yahoo.com)
hüseyin ay (drsahin@yahoo.com)
osman hayran (ohayran@yeditepe.edu.tr)

Version: 3 Date: 30 November 2011

Author's response to reviews:

Dear Editor,

We thank you for giving opportunity to review “Knowledge and attitudes towards complementary and alternative medicine among medical students in Turkey”.

We did the following changes according to feedback and critics of reviewers. Also we added the questionnaire in English form as you have demanded.

I would be grateful if you could take this manuscript under consideration for publication in your journal.

I look forward to hearing from you soon. With my best wishes and regards, I remain,

Sincerely yours,

Hulya Akan, MD, Assistant Professor
Yeditepe University Faculty of Medicine
hakan@yeditepe.edu.tr

Reviewer One

Thank you very much for your feedback and comments.

Abstract

The discussion section contains some repetition of the results section and the discussion needs to take more of a summary approach rather than just repeating...
results.
We really could not understand what you mean. There is no discussion section in the abstract. We just summarized the important findings.

Background
In addition to making statements about international trends in CAM use and medical education in order to add to the existing literature the background should give more information about CAM popularity in the Turkish context. The authors also need to make the case as to why their research question is important.

We have added a new paragraph to the introduction giving also some very new studies published after we have sented this manuscript.

There are some statements which needs further explanation e.g.
"In 1996 a broad based panel evaluated CAM education" what was this panel?
It is reference has been given in the text. As you advised also I added the partners of the panel.
I refer the author's paragraph completely
In June 1996, a panel of experts in medical and nursing education assessed the status of CAM education. The panel included deans and associate deans for curriculum and education from medical and nursing schools and representatives from the American Medical Association (AMA), American Academy of Family Practice (AAFP), Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), Federation of State Medical Boards, Pew Health Professions Commission, American Medical Student Association (AMSA), and other organizations. They made the following 3 recommendations regarding the future role of CAM in health sciences education.

1. Medical and nursing education should include information about complementary practices.
2. Medical and nursing education about each complementary and alternative practice should include information about the discipline's philosophical paradigm, scientific foundation, educational preparation, practice, and evidence of safety and efficacy.
3. National centers of excellence should continue to be developed to foster collaboration among complementary practitioners, nurses, and physicians and to promote synergy among education, research, and clinical practice.

There are some statements which need further explanation and referencing e.g.
"In Turkey, there is no uniform policy...medical curricula.

There is no scientific research about the subject as far as we know, it is difficult to refer. But during the study we have asked all faculties we included. Some faculties have herbal treatment included in pharmacology. Some faculties have not a
program at all, and there seems no consensus about the subject. That is one of the aim of this study to begin a discussion since medical students are one of the important partners of medical curriculum and their expectations must be considered. We have excluded the term uniform policy because at the moment there is a quite uniform policy about medical curriculum but CAM is not included. I feel this term makes some different understandings.

There are some statements which need referencing e.g. Interest in Complementary...among health professionals

Although there few scientific research we have added to the introduction. Since our major point is medical students we have not included to the discussion.

Reference 2 is rather old-could the authors find a more recent reference.
Yes, but the sentence used for reference also related to historical background. So if you don’t mind we prefer to keep as one of the old ones.

Methods
More details needed for clarification

Why were 1st, 5th & 6th year students chosen?
It is added to the explanation of methods. First year students in Turkey usually have only theoretic lessons of basic sciences but not clinical lessons and some extent clinical practice on mankind, so they are fairly foreign to the profession. 5th and 6th year students actively take responsibility of patients under supervision and familiar with real clinic environment. It may not show direct effect of our current medical education on the subject since it is needed prospective observation studies with the same sample, but give indirect clues as it is seen in the study results.

Why were the provinces divided on the basis of level of economic development?
Turkey is a big country and we aim to explore use of CAM in different sociocultural areas, but objective criterias are difficult. Developmental index as an index related many parameters was an objective criteria and as a sample modelling we think this study has a good power to reflect all Turkish medical students and before beginning of the study approved by our statistician. We have not used regional differences in our discussion since we are planning a different study.

How many faculties of medicine in total were in each sub-group?
The number of total medical faculties have been given by the end of 2009.

Why were 6 selected randomly and the 7th not?
All selected randomly but pilot study first completed in the first authors faculty before the beginning of study and at the end pilot study results also added to the statistics.
How many students did the total possible population contain? The numbers have been given according to the statistics by the end of 2009.

What is "the Turkish CAM portal"?
Thank you for your comment. This has ben a misuse infact. At the beginning of study we have screened all web Turkish web cites along with NCCAM. There were few cites usually focused on one or more CAM methodology, only one site was including general information and all methods, at the end we have decided the methods as study group actually we have corrected in the text.

Data analysis:
More details is needed of any comparisons done

Results
% needs to given as well as numbers in the first sentence.
Results have given also in numbers

Any therapies that the general reader may not understand need to be explained briefly e.g. 'healing hands' mean?

Discussion
Care needs to be taken that claims are made in the context of the study e.g. "Some CAM methods are well known by the majority of medical students" this needs in the study population adding to the sentence. It is added as you advised.

Details of the most well known methods practied in Turkey need to be given in the Introduction-the results can then be contextulised against these in the discussion.paragraphs 2,3,4 contain some repetition of the results and need summarising.

A new paragraph added to the introduction generally summarizing Turkey studies and also some very new studies also added.

The content of paragraph 6 also needs mention in the Introduction to set the scene. In the Introduction the authors need to critically discuss existing studies in Turkey and any variables e.g. gender, year of study which have been explored in previous studies.
We preferred to discuss the studies in discussion part

In paragraph 7 the statement "There are very few evidence based data...limited" is a vert broad statement and needs rethinking. There are more evidence based data for some CAM modalities than others and the authors need to think carefully
about the point they wish to make e.g. They might choose to talk about the evidence base for the most popular therapies in Turkey.

Thank you for your comment. We thought in general meaning in the first manuscript and we have changed as we have marked.

The study limitations section is far too brief and needs expanding in the context of the comments made about the methodology above.
It is expanded and marked.

Conclusion
The first sentence needs rephrasing. e.g. Most medical students in the study knew about the CAM methods widely used in Turkey...
It has been corrected.

Minor Essential Revisions
Spelling and grammar needs to be carefully checked throughout.
Translation has been done by a Professional firm and as they have acknowledged us controlled by a native speaker. If you have still some comments We will demand revision from the firm.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests.
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published.
Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.
Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests'