Author's response to reviews

Title: Mentoring programs for medical students - a review of the PubMed literature 2000 - 2008

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear Editor-in-Chief

We thank the reviewers for their comments that helped to improve the paper. We refer to the reviewers’ suggestions as follows:

Answers to the reviewers

Answer to Reviewer 1: Olaf Aasland
Thank you for your comments.
We have added a section “limitations” at the end of the discussion in which we pointed out the three lacking points you referred to (see page 12).

Answer to Reviewer 2: Gudrun Edgren
Thank you for your comments.
We have added a section “limitations” at the end of the discussion in which we pointed out the lacking points you referred to (see page 12).
We further have rewritten the conclusion section taking your suggestions into account (see abstract page 2, and conclusion page 13).

Answer to Reviewer 3: Masami Tagawa
Thank you for your comments which we refer to as follows:
Ad1) The focus of our paper was to review the papers on mentoring programs for medical students in the PubMed literature, and not in a wider range of literature. We have learnt from an earlier review that for this issue the PubMed literature is the most adequate.
Ad 2) We clarified the third step of the search procedure.
Ad 3) We omitted the paragraph on screening and search process in the result section.
Ad 4 and 5) As the other reviewers assessed the description of the reviewed
papers as very informative and clearly arranged, we did not change this part of the paper.

Ad 6) We omitted this sentence as suggested.

Ad 7) We added a section to the uneven geographical distribution of published papers on mentoring programs (see page 9, section ‘Appreciation of mentoring’, second sentence).

Ad 8) We have rewritten the mentioned section (Requirements for mentors and mentees) (page 10)

Answer to Reviewer 4: Elmar Brähler
Thank you for your comments.
As suggested we added further and more extensive definitions of mentoring (see page 3).
We discussed the potential overlap between the various terms mentor, role model, coach and tutor, and contributed definitions as given in some of the referenced literature (see page 3 and 12)
We added a section on experiences with the Resident Mentoring Program at Zurich University (see page 12, fourth paragraph). However, to date we have not yet experiences with a student mentoring program. As outlined, the review is meant as starting point of such a program.

Answer to Reviewer 5: Are Holen
Thank you for your detailed comments.
We considered the mentioned points in the discussion, especially in the new section “limitations” (page 12).
We further have rewritten the conclusion (in the abstract, page 2, and at the end of the main paper, page 13) and phrased this paragraph more cautiously.
Ad abstract: we avoided to repeat the term mentoring program in the third sentence.
Ad keywords: we do not only repeat the same words as keywords as mentioned in the title: we further named: mentoring settings, impact of mentoring, career advancement.
Ad Methods: we changed the lay out of the search strategy steps and inclusion criteria (page 4/5).
Ad Results: We omitted the paragraph on screening and search process in the result section (page 5).
The description of the goals of mentoring programs is more clearly presented.
Ad Discussion: We lined out the findings and shortages of the evaluation procedures in more detail (see page 12).
Ad Table 1 and 2: We changed the wording of the table titles.

Thank you for your time and comments.
We hope that the revised paper can now be published in BMC Medical Education.

Kind regards
Barbara Buddeberg-Fischer
Corresponding author