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 Editor

We have revised the paper as suggested by the reviewers.
Furthermore, the paper has been proofread once again by a native English speaking professional translator.

Answers to the reviewers

Answer to Reviewer 3: Masami Tagawa

Thank you for your comments which we refer to as follows:

Revised manuscript overviews mentorship programs. The method of searching papers is adequate and information of each searched paper is useful for readers. Revised manuscript improves and messages become clear, but discussion and conclusion sections need to modify to clarify the finding of this review paper.

We have modified the discussion and conclusion section as suggested (pp 9-12).

Major Compulsory Revisions

p.5 and 6 Goals of the programs. Four different goals are understandable. Authors classified all reported programs into one category. Some mentoring programs seem to have more than one goal or overlapping goal. Classification of programs might be reconsidered.
The four different goals mentioned are main goals of the mentoring programs. We prefer to keep this classification for a clear differentiation of the programs (page 5).

p. 11 Effects of mentoring programs. Authors mention about effect of mentoring programs at Introduction, section in Results (P.7), the first and second paragraph of Effect of mentoring programs (p.11), and the first sentence of conclusion. At Discussion, authors do not have to repeat the results, and citation of limited but evidenced effects, factors for effective mentoring programs revealed by searched papers, and types of program evaluation are expected. And discussion here has to become base for designing a new program in Europe.

We have omitted the redundant sections and have rewritten the paragraph “Effects of mentoring programs” (page 10/11)

Minor Essential Revisions

p.9. Discussion, first paragraph. The last sentence is the repetition of the results. We have omitted this sentence.

p. 9 About USA and Europe.

The sentence ‘However, if well-established mentoring programs exist in other locations, they would presumably be reported in current literature.’ is based on authors’ supposition. My previous point is that authors need the evidence to conclude the geological uneven distribution. I recommend that authors describe the facts that research papers are from USA and little or no reports were searched from other countries by using criteria and data base.

We have rewritten this section as suggested (page 9).

p.10. Number of students and recommendation of group mentoring. Number of medical student in USA medical school, number of students at reported effective group mentoring programs, and student-faculty ratio may help to understand authors’ recommendation.

We have outlined the suggestions for group mentoring (page 9).

P. 12 Heading of “Limitations”.

Usually, limitation means limitation of authors’ research. This paragraph describes the limitations of searched paper and the last paragraph is the suggestions by authors. Authors should consider a proper heading of this section or rewrite this section. For example, the last paragraph p.11 might be the limitation of this study.

We have changed the headings in “Shortcomings of the papers reviewed” and in
“Suggestions for the design of future mentoring programs” (page 11/12)

Answer to Reviewer 5: Are Holen

Thank you for your comments.

Generally, the paper is now in a fairly good shape. A few iterations of points appearing in the discussion and before should preferably be deleted. The quality of the English and the style still call for improvements.

We have omitted redundant sections.

The paper has been proofread once again by a native English speaking professional translator.

We hope that the revised paper can now be published in BMC Medical Education.

Kind regards

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