Reviewer's report

Title: Evidence-based practice profiles of physiotherapists transitioning into the workforce

Version: 1 Date: 25 September 2011

Reviewer: Karien Mostert

Reviewer's report:

Discretionary Revisions

Recommendations:

1. Title: Consider indicating the study design in the title and not only in the abstract, e.g. add “two cohorts” or “cohort study”. (According to the STROBE-statement on reporting observational studies)

2. “Background”:
   a. Change to “Introduction” as the section contains in addition to the background and rationale, also the objective of the study.

3. Methods:
   a. Give the primary outcome more clearly. Consider adding a table with the definitions of the five domains for easy reference for the reader
   b. What were the reasons for non-participation given by the 2008 cohort?
   c. Clearly state the eligibility criteria. Why were ten out of the 90 of the 2009 cohort not eligible?
   d. Participants obviously knew new that this was a study by their Alma Mater, and could have adapted their answers to “please” or “aggravate” their ex-teachers depending on their undergraduate experience. How was this potential source of bias addressed?
   e. What strategies were implemented to minimise non-participation?
   f. Bias could have been introduced if the two interventions (undergraduate training) were not the same for the two cohorts. Later in the article it is stated that EBP courses were still developing during the period that the two cohorts studied.
   g. Consider uploading the syllabus/syllabi as supplementary files.

4. Results:
   a. How did those who completed the study differ from those who graduated in the 2008 cohort but did not participate or withdrew/dropped out? Only 39% completed the final survey.
   b. Rather give the female : male ratios than leaving it to the reader to do the calculation (2.6 and 1.8).

5. Discussion: Discuss the generalisability (external validity) of the study results
as part of limitations of the study.

Minor Essential Revisions

Refer to the Annotated PDF version for the position of the note in the text

1 Commas to be in front of the subscripts: Olds,1

2 Change spelling to “evidence-based” practice (as in the title) and not “evidence based”. Rule: Compound adjectives take a “hyphen”. Please check all occurrences.

3 Integrate the second sentence into the first: .... design, with two cohorts": Better writing style: "There were two cohorts …” Guideline: Try to avoid There is, There are, There were, etc.

4 The space between Sympathy seems to be lacking.

5 Use “Introduction” rather than “Background”

6 Use a different font than that of the normal text, e.g. bold, for the Level 2 headings. Check all headings for consistency in format and spacing.

7 Methods, subheading: Instruments. Do you mean Instrument (singular)?

8 Rather use ten TO 12, than 10-12 in the text.

9 SurveyMonkey (one word) is used on the homepage of the software developer, and not Survey Monkey.

10 Should this be "51 across TWO test occasions"?

11 Revise the formulation of this sentence. "but to"? It can be confusing to the reader.

12 It looks as if a space is missing between (p=0.26) and The sample size.

13 ES - 0.23 should be ES -0.23 (Space in the wrong position)

14 Rephrase the sentence ("there was" not good style)

15 See Note 3 above.

16 Ditto

17 Ditto

18 Ditto

19 Ditto (Consider: The level of ... is less certain)

20 Open line missing before the last paragraph of the Discussion.

21 References:

Correct inconsistent spacing between references

Ref 5: If the original title is not Evidence-based, add [sic] after Evidence based

I suspect the pages are a704-a705 (and not 704-705).

Ref 6: Ditto. See the previous reference (sic).

Ref 9: Change the first part of the heading to sentence case (Therapy and Trial
Ref 10: Previously a ":" was used and not a "-" to introduce a subtitle. Change to be consistent throughout.

Unbold the last "1" in 2011

Ref 13: Check spelling of "evidence based"

Ref 15: Consider adding page numbers to Cohen.

Ref 17: Change the title of the study to sentence case.

Ref 18: When was this web-site compiled AND when was it accessed by the authors?

Ref 19: Bold the issue number.

Table and Figure legends: Not consistent (Figure in bold, Table 1, 2 not in bold)

Table 1: Consider using only EBP research competency/ies, as and not EBP research EVIDENCE competencies, as "evidence" is already implied in EBP. The same with the first row of the table. Also check the text of the article.

Please clarify what the difference between the two "Critical appraisal" columns are.

Table 2: Also explain the arrows in the first row (change from period to period) at the bottom of the table.

Rather use the symbols and order of symbols as indicated in the BMC general guidelines to authors.

Table 3: Give the level of precision of the CI: 95%.

Remember to check the outline of the final version to avoid a heading at the bottom of a page, without text under the heading.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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'