Author's response to reviews

Title: One year outcomes of a mentoring scheme for female academics: a pilot study at the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Professor Kwizera

RE: MS: 1406122004682271
One year outcomes of a mentoring scheme for female academics:
a pilot study at the Institute of Psychiatry, King’s College London

Thank you for your letter of 16th December 2010 and the reviewers’ comments. We have undertaken all the revisions to the manuscript (1406122004682271) which were helpfully recommended by the three reviewers.

Below I shall incorporate all the reviewers’ comments in order (in ordinary type) and detail point-by-point the changes we have made in the revised manuscript in response to each of these (in bold).

Reviewer #1

1. We are glad that our paper related well to your experience of using a mentoring program. Thank you for your five extremely valuable recommendations, which we have addressed as follows.

2. No aims and objectives explicitly written. There was an indication of the aim as part of the introduction. It may be better to show it separately. The aims have been explicitly stated in a separate section of the abstract on page 2 and have been fully stated in the Introduction on page 3.
3. There was no research question(s) and or no hypothesis. The research question has now been specifically stated both in the Background of the abstract on page 2 and at the end of the Background section on page 3.

4. The number of mentors and mentees in the pool was small and as the authors have stated the power of significance difference might be a problem. Yes, we acknowledge this to be the case (page 11).

5. All Mentees were females and the mentors were a mixed gender. I do not know whether this has any impact on the findings. Was there any specific reason for having mixed genders? Both male and female mentors were recruited to maximise the number of senior individuals who might act as mentors and this point has now been noted in the second paragraph of ‘Study Participants’ on page 4.

6. Mentors were selected without applying any selection criteria. It may be better if the authors can give an explanation for that. Strict selection criteria were not applied as the most important factor was motivation to participate in this pilot study and this point has now been made in the second paragraph of ‘Study Participants’ on page 4.

Reviewer #2

1. The overall language is very tentative, especially in the discussion “might, perhaps” or similar sentiments occur frequently throughout. There is no reason to be so tentative and speculative. It detracts from the value of the paper and from the hard data. The paper will also benefit from some rigorous editing. We have modified the language used, especially in the discussion, to be less tentative. We have edited the paper in line with all your suggestions.

2. In the overview section of the Methods the following statement is made: “In 2007, when the scheme was set up, only 26% of professors were women, compared to 61% of lecturers”. It may sound redundant, but it will be valuable to spell out what the ration for men is. The ratios of female: male professors 1: 2.8; and female: male lecturers 1: 0.6 have now been included in this first paragraph of the Method.

3. Regarding the section on quantitative measures in the Methods section, I a table with the complete list of questions from the various instruments, will be valuable to understand the subsequent results. This will add more value than the existing figure 1. that depicts the flow diagram of the online survey completion. We have now included an Appendix with the questions used from the various instruments.

4. p6 par1 –quantitative measures: verb missing from first sentence. This typographical correction has been made.

5. In the results sections under the heading “Mentees” the data in the first paragraph is given as means with a standard deviation. It would however, also be valuable to indicate the actual number of mentees who showed an increase in their respective scores. We have added two additional columns to Table 1 to show the number of mentees with improved scores at 6 months and 1 year.
6. In paragraph two of this section the last sentence reads: “Results from these sub-analyses were consistent with the analysis of the complete dataset. “I do not understand what this means. **We have improved the wording here to explain that “Results from the sub-analysis of ‘regularly mentored’ mentees was consistent with the analysis of the complete dataset”**.

7. In the results section on mentors “a good relationship with my mentee” is highlighted as a gain for mentors – under which of the subsequent four themes was this included? **This was included under (iii) providing support and seeing mentee develop**.

8. The following statement: “In most cases, gains and expectations were similar but gains could also outweigh pre-mentoring expectations.” Is not clear to me. It seems speculative and I am not sure what is meant by “outweigh”. **The sentence has been amended to read: “In most cases, gains and expectations were similar but there were sometimes gains at 6 months and 1 year that had not been expected at the pre-mentoring stage.” This is illustrated by having ‘a good relationship with my mentee’ and for ‘helping to solve problems’ in Table 3.**

9. The legends for all the tables and boxes must be self-explanatory. **The legends for all the tables and boxes have been revised to make them self-explanatory.**

10. In the discussion, p9 par3 it is stated that: “The apparent increase in self-efficacy over the course of our pilot mentoring study is an interesting confirmatory finding of the importance of this construct for female academics.” Is it appropriate to conclude that an increase in self-efficacy is a confirmatory finding of it’s’ importance. **Three words were missing from this sentence, which has now been modified to read: “The apparent increase in self-efficacy over the course of our pilot mentoring study is an interesting confirmatory finding of the importance of mentoring in improving this construct for female academics.”**

11. On p10 under mentee expectations (par4) it is stated that mentee expectations were unrealistically high. What is this conclusion based on? **We have removed the word ‘unrealistically’, as it was a subjective description based on the finding that mentees had high expectations of career progression within a short time scale of just 6 months.**

**Discretionary Revisions**

1. There were 2 mentees and 3 mentors who did not complete the baseline survey. What were their reasons? I assume they were not included in the rest of the study. **We do not know the reasons for non-completion of the baseline survey and these data were not included in the rest of the study.**

**Reviewer #3**

a) according to figure one and the text 37 mentees completed the survey at 6 months and 30 at one year, but in table 1 the n=33 for 6 months and n= 27 for 1 year – please explain. **Apologies for the confusion that occurred because ‘completed’ referred to undertaking any part of the survey in Figure 1, but in Table 1 implied that all the questions of the relevant quantitative measures had been answered. We**
have now rephrased the footnote to Figure 1 and the text to show that these numbers refer to mentees who undertook any part of the survey, as opposed to completing all parts.

a) Second paragraph under the background section: first sentence – please provide the meaning of the abbreviations. The abbreviation BMA has been removed and replaced with British Medical Association. Second sentence - would the word female not fit better than women? This change has been made.

b) First paragraph under the section on Data Collection needs rewording and correct use of commas. Rewording undertaken and grammar corrected.

c) First paragraph under the section on Quantitative measures (job satisfaction) needs rewording. Rewording undertaken.

d) Second paragraph under the section on Quantitative measures (job-related well-being), last sentence needs rewording. Rewording undertaken.

e) First paragraph under the section on Qualitative measures, first sentence needs commas. Commas inserted

f) First paragraph under the Analysis, Quantitative measures section – first sentence needs revision. Sentence has been revised.

- Discretionary Revisions

a) It would be helpful to be a bit clearer in the first paragraph of the section on study participants. It is unclear whether all female academic staff of senior lecturer level or below and with a contract of at least 1 year was seen as potential mentees, or where there other criteria by which you identified them? Maybe just change the wording of the last sentence. The wording of this paragraph has been changed for clarity.

b) Second paragraph – was the mentees identified and after that the mentors or were the process simultaneous? Simultaneous process (this has now been specified). When did the mentees get a chance to nominate a mentor – before or after inclusion in the study? At the point of recruitment into the scheme (this has now also been specified).

c) Third paragraph – is there a difference between a mentor and a senior mentor as being referred to? There is no difference – the word senior was included to indicate that mentors were senior in academic hierarchy to their mentee, but this is now self-evident within the paragraph.

d) Forth paragraph – who did the training and supervision? Training was conducted by Dr Amy C Iversen and Professor David Clutterbuck (details of website included); supervision was from Dr Iversen (her initials have been inserted at the relevant points).
As requested we are submitting the revised manuscript with changes highlighted in yellow.

We look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Rina Dutta, MRCPsych, PhD