Reviewer’s report

Title: Information literacy skills in a biomedical science curriculum: assessment and intervention.

Version: 1 Date: 26 August 2010

Reviewer: patricia sexton

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NO REVISION: The authors seek to discern whether health professions students (dental) who are not adequately prepared with regard to information literacy when entering school (information garnered from a prior study by the same authors) can benefit from an educational intervention designed to remediate this gap and bring them to a level of competence.

The question and background are clear and well written. The title and abstract are appropriate. The question is important and applicable to all health professions. Three consecutive classes of dental students were enrolled in the project. The authors used a single experimental group without control as seems appropriate given the nature of the question. The appendices are very good and will enable this work to be generalizable.

MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISION: The data gathered are very straightforward and presented primarily as percentages. Much of the data seem to be presenting only one of the three cohort years and that year is not stated. Other graphs present more than one cohort but without explanation as to why the third is not presented. The major question – the differences between percent incorrect answers prior to and after the educational intervention – uses only a single cohort. This would be significantly stronger if all three cohorts were presented.

Differences between the two of the three cohort years of students are presented in figure one. Although the authors note “significant percentages of students unable to provide correct responses,” no statistical analysis is presented. Thus, the word significant should not be used. Further, while there are clear differences between the two cohorts presented no discussion of this or analysis is offered. Examining the information from an experimental point of view requires that one compare the groups (as is discussed briefly but not presented in your tables or figures). The information presented does indicate that the intervention was, in many ways successful. I would suggest that the three cohorts be represented in Figure 1 and a note added to the discussion speculating, if possible, on differences seen between the groups. Tables 1 and 2 are fine but note what cohort(s) the data comes from. Table 3 is obsolete if this data is added into figure 1. Either include table 2 or Figure 2. Both are not necessary. Figure 3 may be helpful but should again include all three cohorts.

MINOR REVISION: No limitations of the study are stated in the manuscript. This should be added to the discussion. This work builds on the author’s prior work
(Kingsley and Kingsley, BMC Medical Education 2009, 9:7.). Attribution is adequate although it seems that there is key literature in the nursing and medicine fields that is appropriate and not used.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare no competing interests.