Reviewer's report

Title: What are the learning outcomes of a postgraduate training course in dermatology for primary care doctors?

Version: 1 Date: 18 December 2010

Reviewer: Feroze Kaliyadan

Reviewer's report:

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

Discretionary Revisions

a. The research question is well defined. However the nature of the certificate course could be made more specific in the title and abstract (e.g.: Short post-graduate course on basic dermatology)

b. A bit more description of the course might be nice. The authors mention a problem oriented approach. How exactly was this carried out? Was 2 hours for two topics sufficient? (And I assume that the total course time was 20 hours-was this sufficient to cover most of basic dermatology?)- so was the course essentially a didactic exercise? And what about the assessment? Was there any assessment of the candidates at the end of the course? Was any practical hand on clinical work involved?

c. The discussion section might be enhanced by a few additions – you could use subheadings like – ‘need for the study’ and ‘future plans’

d. The limitations are clearly stated, however considering that less than half the participants did not respond to the questionnaire (as mentioned in the ‘limitations’ section of your article), is it possible that only the group that actually benefited from the course responded, thereby skewing your data?

e. In your discussion section you mention “Very few medical schools around the world have developed similar postgraduate training programme to improve the dermatological knowledge and skills of primary care doctors.” Do you have any references of similar programs anywhere else in the world?

General comments:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?

The authors present an interesting and well written study. The research question is well defined. However the nature of the certificate course could be made more specific in the title and abstract (e.g.: Short post-graduate course on basic dermatology)

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?

The authors use a well designed methodology. Any specific reason why a four
point Likert was preferred over a five point Likert scale? A bit more description of
the course in the methodology section might be nice. The authors mention a
problem oriented approach. How exactly was this carried out? Was 2 hours for
two topics sufficient? (And I assume that the total course time was 20 hours-was
this sufficient to cover most of basic dermatology?)

3. Are the data sound?
The data collection method and the collected data appear quite sound

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data
deposition?
Yes the manuscript adheres to the relevant standards for reporting and data
deposition

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported
by the data?
The discussion section might be enhanced by a few additions – you could use
subheadings like – ‘need for the study’ and ‘future plans’

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
The limitations are clearly started. However considering that less than half the
participants did not respond to the questionnaire (as mentioned in the ‘limitations’
section of your article) , is it possible that only the group that actually benefited
from the course responded, thereby skewing your data?

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building,
both published and unpublished?
Yes and the references appear to be apt.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
Like mentioned before - The research question is well defined, However the
nature of the certificate course could be made more specific in the title and
abstract (eg: Short post –graduate course on basic dermatology )

9. Is the writing acceptable?
The article is well written and the standard of English is quite good.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests