Author's response to reviews

Title: Mentorship needs at academic institutions in resource-limited settings: A survey at Makerere University College of health sciences

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Author's response to reviews:

Response to reviewers’ comments
Reviewer 1

Major Compulsory Revisions.
1. The method of analysis of the qualitative data collected is not well described in the abstract and main body of the manuscript. How were the themes generated? Did they stem from the questions asked of the respondents?
We have revised the methods section in abstract and on page 6, in the methods section. Themes were pre-determined by the investigators

Minor Essential Revisions
1. It would be helpful if the basic principles of mentorship are highlighted in the introduction of the manuscript.
This has been defined in the first sentence of Background as a partnership in personal and professional growth and development
2. The coined terms: “mentoring culture” and “culture of mentoring” seemed to be used to interchangeably. Is there an agreed use of each of the terms?
We have excluded these terms since they are not standard

Abstract:
3. In the introduction of the abstract the sentence reads “….this resource…..” which resource setting are you referring to?
This has been edited
4. Results: How many more mentees are being referred to in the second line?
Methods:
6. The support information that appears in the study population section could go well in the acknowledgement section.
This has been edited and moved as suggested

7. Could you describe the study population i.e. is senior, junior, potential not potential mentee or mentor?
These were unnecessary terms; we have only two groups; mentors and mentees

8. How were the responses to the in-depth information collected?
We have described this in detail and clarified that these were self-administered open-ended questionnaires

Results:
9. In the first paragraph you mention eligible mentors who were these individuals? The word eligible is not required so it has been deleted

Discussion:
10. The first paragraph has a section that could fit well in the recommendation section
   “……explore all possible strategies ……mentors”
   1
   edited

11. The report on the seminar following data collection of the study seems to be misplaced in the discussion section.
   This is discussed as an immediate action that was taken in response to the data collected

12. Under the sub heading; “Improvement of mentorship skills” the second paragraph, last sentence indicates a model that is being used in other settings, which model is being referred to?
   This been clarified a capacity building model

13. In the same paragraph, why the special mention for training and mentoring for HIV/AIDS care, how about the other conditions?
   edited

14. There are a number of grammatical errors that should also be corrected.
   edited

15. No limitations have been mentioned in this study.
Limitation has been mentioned on page 11; second paragraph
Reviewer 2
Major compulsory revisions
The authors should describe what mentoring consist of in the introduction.
We have defined mentorship in the first sentence of background.
Minor Essential Revisions
Spelling mistakes
- Abstract
  first paragraph, there should be a comma after however. The last sentence should also be made clear, "this resource setting", which one?
second paragraph, it will be helpful to indicate the numbers interviewed.
third paragraph, use of "...mentors had >=?" missing word.
edited
Study procedures
First paragraph, it will also be helpful to mention the number of the "convient sample" and justify or explain why this number was chosen.
Details of section of the participants have been included in the study procedures section.
Results
Table 1. The title does not describe the contents of the table and should consider revising it.
We have revised title to reflect perspectives of mentees
Discussion
First paragraph, third sentence is ambiguous unless it states where the study reffered to was conducted.
Third paragraph, ...current principle of the college. Should be principal.
We have edited this paragraph
Associate editor’s comments
Abstract
Introduction: Please include a comment on the goal of enhancing leaders in Global Health which is mentioned in the conclusion.
Included as recommended
Methods: Please correct the terminology for the sample type. This is a "convenience sample" not a "convenient sample". Include the number of study participants in each section as suggested by the reviewers. Mention of the telephone interviews is not needed for the abstract. A mention of the type of
analysis (qualitative content analysis) should be added.

Results: Please clearly define when you are presenting qualitative findings versus quantitative findings.

Results section is edited

Conclusion: Ok to mention "culture of mentoring" here if you define it better in the paper.

We have deleted this term

Paper

Second paragraph, 3rd sentence should read "taking THE lead..." no "taking lead".

edited

Reference 6 requires more information in the reference list. Where can the reader find this reference? Is there an URL?

I have included the URL

The last paragraph is very good. May want to include something like "Using quantitative and qualitative methods we set out to..."

edited

Methods:

This is the area for major revision. This is a qualitative study in which quantitative data on participants was also collected. This needs to be very clearly described.

First, Forgaty should be Fogarty.

Edited

Please describe the setting (MAKCHS, who the potential mentors and mentees are). It is a bit unclear which "pool" the participants were recruited from and how they were recruited? Were all potential participants (including students) recruited from the UFAA and USHS? If so this means up to 900 potential mentors and mentees were contacted to participate? How were they contacted email, flyers, other announcements? How were the 22 mentors chosen? How many mentees were chosen? Please be more specific regarding inclusion and exclusion criteria for potential mentees and mentors.

I have included the explanation of how faculty contacted.

Interviews:

No need to state that this is a cross-sectional study. It is a qualitative study using in depth interviews.

Who conducted the interviews? How long did they take about?

We have clarified that these were pretested open-ended self-administered questionnaire. Completing one took about 15 minutes

Follow up follows Were they one on one? Phone calls were to remind people that did not respond to emails. They were given a hard copy and they had call reminders to complete it for picking.
Were incentives provided to study participants? No incentives provided

Did interviewers know the study participants ahead of time? If yes, what was their relationship?

Was there a structured interview guide that was used by the interviewer?

If yes, how were the questions developed? Expert opinion, previous literature (if yes should be cited), other? Please list the questions that were asked either in the text or as a separate figure. Were questions piloted in any form before being used in the study? Were interviews transcribed for analysis?

Themes pre-determined by expert opinion of the seven member-UFAA steering committee. The questionnaire was retested.

Quantitative data: What specific questions were asked? Were potential mentees asked any quantitative or demographic questions?

We have clarified that quantitative data collected was on level of education and number of mentees. No transcription required.

Data Analysis: This section requires more information. Please describe the type of qualitative analysis that was performed (for example, content analysis, editing analysis style etc). Who conducted the analysis? What was the process (researchers read the transcripts to identify themes)? Did more than one researcher conduct the analysis? If yes, how were disagreements about the findings handled or consensus on the themes arrived at?

Data was analysed manually by two people and reviewed by the committee members.

Reference to the tables should be in the results not the methods. Edited.

Results

Quantitative findings

Should begin with the number of participants in both groups. Is there any demographic data such as gender, age, years on faculty? Is there any quantitative data on the mentees?

Edited. Age, years on faculty was not collected.

Qualitative findings

Please clearly state that qualitative results are being presented as themes. Ex "Analysis of interviews among potential mentees identified the following themes:......

I would prefer to see presentation of the representative quotes in the text as opposed to in a table. In this case it would be fine to include fewer quotes.

We have edited results section and included the quotes.

Discussion: Nice overview of the findings and suggestions for improving the state of mentoring. Generally the discussion should begin with a concise summary of the studies findings followed by a more in depth discussion of individual important findings.
We have included a summary of the results in the first paragraph of discussion.

The second paragraph, "Improvement of mentorship skills" starts with a statement about roles and responsibilities which is not that same as skills. Please clarify how these to are related or present as separate ideas with separate strategies for improvement.

The fifth sentence in this paragraph is not very clear and again not specifically related to skills. What are the key skills, attributes, roles or responsibilities for mentors? There is much written in the literature on what makes a good mentor. Consider mentioning this here as it pertains to your study's findings.

Edited this section as recommended

There is a lot of overlap in the discussion lack of time is linked to lack of mentors. The lack of time theme could be incorporated into the limited pool of mentors section or both could be listed in a section on barriers to mentoring.

Repetition avoided and sections merged

Limitations: Some limitations should be mentioned.

Limitation mentioned as the limited response by the study participants

References

Please provide more information for reference number 6.

URL provided

Table 1 needs a more descriptive title

Table 2 and 3 recommend that these present themes only and representative quotes be incorporated into the text of the manuscript.

Tables have been edited to exclude the quotes

Authors contribution section has been added