Author's response to reviews

Title: Evaluation of a longitudinal consultation skills course at a new UK medical school

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Author's response to reviews: see over
20th July 2010

Dear Sir or Madam

Re: Cross-sectional evaluation of a longitudinal consultation skills course at a new UK medical school. By Alexia Papageorgiou, Susan Miles, Michelle Fromage, Julie Kemmy & Sam J Leinster

The authors would like to thank both of the Reviewers for their useful follow-up comments, our responses to which are now incorporated into the revised text using track changes. Specific responses to the Reviewers’ comments are attached.

We would be happy to make any further changes the Editor wishes.

Yours faithfully

Dr Alexia Papageorgiou

Enc.
Reviewer 1 (Anne M Cushing)
Q3 – The description of the response rates has been reworded as suggested.

Q4 & Q6 – The two sections of the Discussion referred to by the reviewer have been moved as suggested, so that the summary paragraph is the last paragraph of the Discussion.

Q5 – The first sentence of the Discussion summarising the findings has been reworded as suggested.

Q6 – There could be numerous reasons as to why the response rate is lower in Years 1 and 5, for example later consultation skills sessions in Year 5 were close to the exam period which may have led some students to not attending the session so they could revise or the tutor forgetting to hand out the form for later sessions. But we would only be speculating about the possible reasons for these lower response rates and in the interests of not further adding to the text (as suggested by Reviewer 2) we don’t believe this information would provide added value to the reader. However, we would be happy to add some speculations about this if the Editor feels it would be useful.

Q8 – We have revised the title, adding “Cross-sectional”, as suggested by the reviewer.

Q9 – The manuscript has been read through for errors following acceptance of the last set of track changes and corrected where appropriate.

Reviewer 2 (Barbara Buermann)
The title has been revised as suggested by the reviewer, by adding “Cross-sectional”.

The last sentence of the Background section of the Abstract has been corrected as noted by the reviewer.

Regarding the reference [0]. Neither the originally submitted nor submitted revised manuscript contains a reference 0. However having now been sent a copy of the pdf created from the submitted manuscript available to the reviewers we can see that it contains a reference 0 at the points referred to by the reviewer. There is no reference 0, so we can only assume that this was added erroneously during the pdf creation process.

The location of Table 4 has been moved to after the first paragraph in the Results section as suggested by the Reviewer.

We have re-read the Discussion after accepting the track changes with a view to slimming the text where possible. However, we decided that this was not feasible without compromising the quality of the information as the Discussion had been expanded to accommodate the reviewers’ previous comments. We feel that any cutting at this stage would only eliminate individual words and not significantly reduce the word count. We have split some of the long paragraphs in the Results and Discussion that had been created when revising the first draft, which we believe improves readability. We hope that this will be acceptable to the Editor.