Author's response to reviews

Title: Family Medicine Graduates' Perceptions of Intimidation, Harassment, and Discrimination during Residency Training

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Author's response to reviews: see over
September 22 2011

We have responded to all the reviewer’s concerns. We appreciate – once again – the constructive feedback that we have received. I have embedded our responses in the text of each of the reviewers comments below.

Truly,

Rod

#1. Reviewer's report Title: Family Medicine Graduates' Perceptions of Intimidation, Harassment, and Discrimination during Residency Training Version: 2 Date: 11 August 2011 Reviewer: Debra Jackson Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the revised version of this interesting and potentially useful paper. This version is greatly enhanced from the previous version. I offer the following comments:

While there are some weaknesses in the way the study was conducted, these are (or can be) acknowledged as limitations. Suggest that the age of some of the data be also acknowledged as a limitation, as some of this data may not accurately reflect the current situation.

> Done.

I am not sure of what is meant by the sentence "Formal qualitative methods were not used with free text data".

> Reworded.

There are a number of single sentence paragraphs, which could be merged to form stronger multi-sentence paragraphs.

It is generally not acceptable to begin a sentence with a numeral. Suggest correcting this.

> Done.

Suggest provision of references to support the following assertions made on page 12: "These hospital based individuals are part of a traditional power structure and hierarchy in which family medicine residents may be at the lower end of the pecking order and in a values challenged system possibly less deserving of respect. More broadly, the literature reveals that predominant perpetrators of mistreatment in medical education settings were consultants, supervisors, instructors, physicians, colleagues, nurses, allied health personnel, and sometimes patients."
> Done. We have carefully reviewed the literature specific to this section and have provided some additional references that support our assertions.

This sentence (also on p.12) is rather weak and could benefit by some minor expansion/elucidation: ". While not all challenges and critiques are mistreatment, some use teaching as a forum to humiliate [8,22,26]."

> We have reworded this sentence. The meaning is now clearer and the sentence stronger.

Consistency needed with use of quotation marks; on page 13 for example, some are single (ie: 'troublemaker'), and some are double (ie: "prove").

> Done.

**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 that I have no competing interests
Reviewer: Narelle Shadbolt

Reviewer's report:
Thank you for asking me to re-review this paper on IHD in a Canadian Family Medicine program. This is an important area.

It is clear that the authors have addressed the major concerns. Major revisions – nil

Minor essential revisions - I am concerned about the use of the ‘retrospective cross sectional survey’ I suggest that is better described as a retrospective survey.

> Done

I still feel that there are issues with the robustness of the methodology, which in itself is not a major problem because of the importance of opinion and contextual narrative in study areas like this. It may be better to state this.

> Done

It would be very interesting and possibly essential to analyse the results according to year of graduation to see if the incidence has changed over the potentially 10 years of residents responding to the survey

> We have considered this comment carefully. Respectfully, we disagree. Our cohort is only 5 years; if we had a 10 or 12 year cohort, then there might be something to be gained by examining the data by year. Specifically, with a total of 105 respondents reporting IHD, that would leave us with about 20/year and about 3-4/year for the IMGs. It would be difficult to draw any meaningful conclusions on such small numbers.

Discretionary.
The paper is extremely wordy and I suggest that a rigorous edit would both enhance its readablinty and its impact.
We have down some careful editing to enhance both readability and impact. We appreciated this reviewer’s comment to prompt us to look at the manuscript once more from both the macro and also the micro perspective.

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.