Reviewer’s report

Title: Tracing the evolution of students’ confidence in clinical and patient communication skills during a clinical internship: a multi-methods study

Version: 2 Date: 2 April 2012

Reviewer: Yesim Senol

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Tracing the evolution of students’ confidence in clinical and patient communication skills during a clinical internship: a multi-methods study

My opinion related to the study entitled “tracing the evaluation of students’ confidence in clinical and patient communication skills during a clinical internship” is provided below:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? Yes
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? No. Some crucial details such as the time period and the school are not mentioned in the material and method section. How many years did the education last? What is the content of the education? When was the study performed?. How long did the study last? And also I would like to ask the authors what they meant by cohorts mentioned in the study. Are Patient communication confidence Scale and Clinical skills confidence scales valid and reliable? Are these scales developed by the authors? What are the minimum and maximum scores of the six-point Likert scale? Is there any negative coding among the items?
3. Are the data sound? As far as I can tell, the data and statistically analysis are fine.
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? The reference is added in the results section. The statements with references 15 and 16 in the “results” section should be moved into “discussion section”. The results should be revised and presented better for more understanding. For example, adding a new column defining the change of the confidence of the patient communication and clinical skills during internship period to Table 1 may be useful in terms of displaying the change.
5. Are the discussion and conclusion well balanced and adequately supported by the data? yes
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? No.
7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? Yes
8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? I would suggest a slight revision of the title. Regarding the fact that the study was performed with chiropractic students, it would be better placing a relevant statement into the title.
9. Is the writing acceptable? yes but the typographical errors should be corrected (especially references)

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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 interest