Author's response to reviews

Title: Team-based learning for psychiatry residents: a mixed methods study

Authors:

Isabel McMullen (isabel.mcmullen@kcl.ac.uk)
Jonathan Cartledge (jonathandcartledge@yahoo.co.uk)
Ruth E Levine (re levine@utmb.edu)
Amy C Iversen (amy.c.iversen@kcl.ac.uk)

Version: 3 Date: 16 July 2013

Author's response to reviews:

28 Darrell Road
London SE22 9NL
16 July 2013

Dear Sir,

Re: Revision 2 of MS: 1965727171924641

Team-based learning for residents: a mixed methods study
Isabel McMullen, Jonathan Cartledge, Ruth E Levine and Amy C Iversen

Thank you for your comments regarding the above manuscript. Please find attached the revised manuscript. Below I address the changes made in response to the comments made by the editor and reviewers.

Editor’s comments

1. Regarding the VTS comparison, an independent t-test was used rather than a paired test as it could not be assumed that the same participants completed the pre and post questionnaires, due to varying participant attendance at the first and final sessions. As the questionnaires were completed anonymously, it could not be guaranteed that the samples were truly paired. This has been clarified, I hope, in the manuscript, under the ‘statistical methods’ section as having read reviewer 2’s comments, this seemed the most logical place to comment on this.

2. Both of the typos listed have been amended and the manuscript has been thoroughly checked to make sure there are no others.

3. I have changed the last two rows of Table 1 so they read ‘Total score for…’ which I agree makes more sense.

4. I apologise for not going through all the points individually. I have rectified that below by addressing each point from reviewer 2’s comments on both versions of the manuscript below.

Reviewer 1 comments

No changes suggested
Reviewer 2 comments on this version

Minor essential revisions

1. The statistical methods section has been amended to clarify that a t test was used.

2. Regarding the comparison of the VTS scale, an independent t-test was used rather than a paired test as it could not be assumed that the same participants completed the pre and post questionnaires, due to varying participant attendance at the first and final sessions. As the questionnaires were completed anonymously, it could not be guaranteed that the samples were paired. This has also been added to the statistical methods section.

Reviewer 2 comments on previous version

Background

1) The rationale of using TBL for residents was explored in greater detail in the third paragraph of page 4 and the top of page 5. We hope that this explores how we hoped that learning would improve using TBL and the conceptual framework question raised in point 2 below.

2) Are there any conceptual frameworks that can be used to justify the use of TBL for resident training? This has been discussed in the third paragraph of page 4 and top of page 5.

Methods

1) Sample size was limited by the numbers of residents attending the module, thus a sample size calculation was not undertaken. This has been added to page 5, final paragraph.

2) This was a pragmatic observational study. An alternative design such as a randomised controlled trial was rejected as it was not practical to run two parallel courses for the numbers of residents who were enrolled on the course. This has been included in the first paragraph of the methods section on page 5.

3) A separate paragraph entitled statistical methods has been added (page 7).

Minor essential revisions

General comments

1) I hope that our use of colons (:) and semi-colons (;) is now appropriate.

2) The sentences which started with digits have now been changed.

3) The title has been amended to add the word Psychiatry before residents.

4) The paragraph in the background section which was suggested to be removed has been.

5) The word psychiatry has been added before the word residents in the 5th paragraph.

Methods

1) The paragraph on ethical clearance was not moved as the original placing of
the paragraph appeared to be in keeping with other papers published by the journal.

2) In the second paragraph (setting), the sentence in question now reads, ‘We modified an existing weekly training course consisting of lectures grouped into curriculum-themed modules.’ I hope that this is clearer.

3) In the fifth paragraph (structure of the module), the penultimate sentence now reads, ‘When prompted by facilitators, all teams simultaneously revealed their answer by holding up a card marked with a letter to indicate their choice’. I hope that this is clearer.

4) Under the measures section, the abbreviations have been added after the full form when they are used for the first time

Results

1) The concern that the CES comparison could be influenced by confounding factors is a valid criticism. This has been therefore been discussed in the CES section in the methods (page 7) and a sentence added to the limitations section on page 15 to try and address these concerns.

2) The issue about using a paired vs unpaired t test is discussed above.

Discussion

The two sentences highlighted as reading awkwardly have been modified. I hope they are now clearer.

Many thanks for considering this revised manuscript for publication.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Isabel McMullen