Reviewer's report

Title: Multisource feedback analysis of pediatric outpatient teaching

Version: 1 Date: 21 April 2013

Reviewer: Anita Laidlaw

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
I found the focus of this paper confused. The aim of the study was to evaluate the outpatient teaching skills of medical students by using multisource feedback (MSF) from family members of patients (as it was a pediatric outpatient clinic), nurses, a clinical teacher and a research assistant. However it was not clear how this evaluation was achieved and precisely what was being evaluated. I was confused as to whether it was the teaching skills or indeed the communication skills of the students or the teacher that was being evaluated or whether it was the MSF methodology?

Major compulsory revisions: The focus needs to be more clearly defined. This will of course influence the introduction and previous literature cited in the introduction and throughout the structure of the paper.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
I found the methods incomplete. Major compulsory revisions: It was not clear whether all those assessing the participants were all in a room at one time watching the video. The family members did not seem to be included in this description so I was not sure when / where they completed their assessment. How did assessors record their results, did they complete a paper assessment? Who classified the cases?

3. Are the data sound?
It was not clear exactly how many individuals (e.g. nurses, teachers) participated in the study therefore it is difficult to determine whether the data is sound. Was a paired t-test used? Why only descriptive statistics for the rest of the data analysis? I was not sure how applicable t-test would be to this data as it states in methods that an ordinal scale was used for scoring? The numbers of respondent groups changes from 4 to 5 at times (and between results and discussion).

Major compulsory revisions: report how many individual completed the multisource feedback. Explain and justify the analysis methods used. Consistently report respondent group numbers.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Major compulsory revision: report t values for t-tests and standard deviations if these are applicable tests.
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

The authors state that the patient satisfaction was not related to the number of questions asked – however they do not present data on number of questions asked. The final part of the discussion regarding patient-centred behaviour did not seem to relate to the data presented well. The conclusions state that MSF provides more accurate evaluation however I don’t see evidence presented which gauges accuracy of assessment.

Major compulsory revisions: The discussion and conclusions need to be more focussed to the data presented, specifically the points raised above.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?

Some limitations are described. However one of the main limitations, that this is a single site study using a specifically designed instrument and therefore may not be generalisable was not.

Major compulsory revision: discuss generalisability of results.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?

Some references lacking for example for previous research suggesting the Taiwanese modest nature might impact on self-report.

Discretionary revision: reference insertion

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?

The title and abstract reflect the content.

9. Is the writing acceptable?

I found the wording of the discussion a little confusing – for example members rather than respondents, and advantages and disadvantages rather than strengths and weaknesses. The wording on some tables and figures is also confusing.

Minor essential revisions: checking wording of above points.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.