Author's response to reviews

Title: Near-peer physiotherapy students as standardized patients enhances self-reported constructs in both the learner and the near-peer patient

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Author's response to reviews:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Reviewer comments. I have outlined the changes below, and have uploaded two versions of the manuscript: the main one is the version without track changes (ie, "clean"), and the "additional files" contains a version with track changes.

Title

• Changed “near peer” to senior, and “learner” to junior (this is changed throughout the manuscript for consistency and clarity). CD

• Changed “self-reported constructs” to specify self-efficacy and satisfaction. CD

• Title now reads: Senior physiotherapy students as standardised patients for junior students enhances self-efficacy and satisfaction in both junior and senior students

Abstract

• Removal of “near-peer” throughout, as above.

• Last sentence of background restructured into 2 sentences to enhance clarity. CD

• Explanation of “insight” – inclusion of “into their abilities” and “into what it is like to be a patient”. CD

• Keywords – “near-peer”; replaced with “peer-assisted learning”

Background
• P5 – explanation of how physiotherapy students have a different set of needs ("in addition to communication skills including development of handling skills and ability to perform physical techniques.") BM

• P6 – clarification of “we explored” to show that this is of current interest and has not yet been established. CD

Participants

• P7 Clarification of invitation of participants in the evaluation of the learning experience, vs inclusion of students in the compulsory learning experience. CD

• P7 Inclusion of Ethics Committee.

• P7 Inclusion of how senior students were contacted and recruited; statement that senior students volunteered to participate (not compulsory). CD

• P8 rewording of sentence as suggested by BM “Groups of 5-6 junior students…”

• P8 Additional detail provided in final sentence of para 1 to enhance clarity “only (for example, mobilisation of a surgical patient)” …

• P8 additional information provided to clarify the role of the students and educators in providing feedback. CD

Survey

• P8-9 Restructure of paragraph to clarify the format of the survey. Clarification that the survey was based on a previous study rather than general literature, and how that survey was adapted for our study. CD

Analysis

• P9 clarification of the use of t-tests (paired vs independent). BM

Results

• 92% as queried by CD – this should now be clearer given that

• P11 Comment re analyses made by BM – after consultation with our statistician, we have not altered the statistical approach, and it is in line with the methods used in the James et al. (2001) study.

Other comments by BM:

P15 Sentence added to para1 to support how this work is novel.

The main message from this study is that senior students as standardised patients leads to positive changes in self-efficacy and insight for both parties, and high satisfaction with the approach. This has not been studied before in
physiotherapy, and previous studies in other health sciences recommend that students who are not directly peers are the most effective. Therefore, our approach using senior students is novel, and may influence practices in other health sciences. Further, it may be an appealing alternative to paying actors for this role, and this is to be determined.

We agree that the paper focuses on student satisfaction with the learning experience, and this is now reflected in the title, abstract and body to strengthen this.

P21 = corrected Year 4 proportion to 66.7%. BM

Other comments by CD:

P13: sentence added to para 1 of discussion, to highlight the benefits of an engaging and satisfying approach to the learning experience.