Author's response to reviews

Title: Success in publication by postgraduate students in psychiatry in Brazil: an empirical evaluation of the relative influence of English proficiency and advisor expertise

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Author's response to reviews: see over
To Prof. Fernando Marques
Academic Editor, BioMed Central Editorial

RE: MS: 1480494731107014
Title: Success in publication by postgraduate students in psychiatry in Brazil: an empirical evaluation of the relative influence of English proficiency and advisor expertise

Dear Professor Fernando Marques,

Many thanks for your letter dated on August 5th 2014, referring to the above manuscript and for giving us once again the opportunity to re-submit the paper after making the additional revisions that were requested. Please find below our answers to each of the concerns/suggestions raised by the reviewers.

We sincerely hope that you will judge that we have addressed the reviewers’ comments and concerns satisfactorily.

We thank you once again for your attention, and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Alexandre Cunha
Geraldo F. Busatto
(On behalf of all authors)
Reviewer: Carrie Cameron

Minor Essential Revisions:

1. P 4, paragraph 2: What are graduate ‘services’?
>>Thank you for your considerate comments. We agree that the term ‘services’ may take our readers to an unclear meaning for the department we are referring to. Thus, we replaced the word ‘services’ for graduate “programs” (definition already used in other parts of the text).

2. Briefly define H-index at first mention.
>> As requested, we included a brief definition of H-index when first mentioning this term in the Introduction section (see page 7, paragraph 2). We also provided the reference where this definition was taken from (J. E. Hirsch: An index to quantify an individual’s scientific research output. PNAS. 2005; 102(46): 16563-16572).

3. P 5, paragraph 1: Explain which ‘capabilities’ of academic advisors—you apparently intend ‘scientific’ as shown on p 7.
>>As requested, we explained what we meant by capabilities of academic advisors, as being the quantity and impact of their papers published in indexed, peer-reviewed periodicals (page 5, paragraph 1).

4. Recheck references: Vasconcelos is now 10, not 9.
>> As requested, we corrected the number for this reference (page 6 paragraph 2).

5. Word ‘that’ should be added for clarity, first paragraph of Stat Analysis:
“investigate the influence THAT English proficiency…”
As suggested by the reviewer, we added the pronoun, which made the meaning of the sentence clearer (page 7 paragraph 3).

6. P 8: Make the following fragment grammatically parallel: “we used a model of Poisson regression for count data, whereas we used a linear regression model for the analyses”

As requested, the sentence was modified in order to make the fragment grammatically parallel (page 8 paragraph 1).

7. P9, discussion of ‘professional translators’: Pls clarify if you intend ‘paid’ when using the word ‘professional’. The issue of the financial burden of translation and editing is significant. (This is indirectly noted on p. 13.)

As requested we added the word “paid” in order to better specify what we meant (page 9, paragraph 3).

8. P 11: "Despite the fact that the subjects in our sample had considerable previous knowledge of English, most of them sought at least some degree of English editing assistance. Such finding clearly indicates that successfully publishing in journals of greater impact requires knowledge of scientific writing in English that was not covered in the English courses the students had taken."

While it is true that proficiency in scientific English is rarely achieved with typical ESL or EFL curricula, it is not a logical outcome that authors seek editing assistance commensurate with their proficiency. Some authors with near-perfect English seek editing on every document “just in case,” and others with poor English resist editing, especially if they have to pay for it. Please modify this statement a bit. Also the sentence is slightly ambiguous as to how broadly this statement is meant to apply; be careful about
overgeneralizing the behavior of Brazilians at an elite international university to all L2 authors, as not all nationalities', institutions', or disciplines' authors behave the same with respect to seeking editing. (Elsewhere this is recognized explicitly.)

>>We concede that one cannot safely assume that authors seek editing assistance only as a function of poorer English proficiency. We do agree with the reviewer that proficient authors may still seek editing on their documents, while others with poor English may resist editing. We have included those potential explanations in our discussion of this finding. We have also reduced the assertiveness of our initial explanation, changing the expression “clearly indicates” by “may be due to the fact”. Finally, we made additional changes to this paragraph along the lines suggested by the reviewer, in order to make our statements as unambiguous as possible in regard to how broadly they are meant to apply (see page 11 paragraph 2).

9. Also, suggest you change ‘scientific production’ to ‘publication productivity’.

>>As suggested by the reviewer, the words ‘scientific production’ were changed to ‘publication productivity’ (firstly corrected on page 5 paragraphs 1 and 2 and through other pages where this expression is used). We do agree that this a better and clearer term for what we intend to refer to.

10. P12, second paragraph: ‘assistance of professional translators WAS used’.

Also, ‘Consistent with that’ rather than ‘In consistency.’

>>As requested, we changed the verb (1st sentence), the preposition and the noun for the adjective (2nd sentence) (page 13 paragraph 1).

11. P 14, bottom of page: ‘vast majority of the student who WERE found…’

>> As requested, we corrected the verb (page 15 paragraph 1).