Reviewer's report

Title: Personal health promotion at US medical schools: a quantitative study and qualitative description of deans' and students' perceptions

Version: 1 Date: 20 July 2004

Reviewer: Omar Khan

Reviewer's report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
Under METHODS: 'dean' should be 'deans'

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
- Since the aim of the paper, in the Introduction, is to assess both typical and outstanding health promotion environments, it may be useful to also survey schools NOT known for such practices. It may well be these 'underachieving' schools that need the most attention.
- If the paper wishes to make a stronger point about the value of a healthy environment for health promotion- the conclusion can be strengthened with recommendations on how to measure the impact of healthy behaviors in those schools which include them; why it is essential for the many schools not surveyed to also be studied; and a description of the barriers that accompany implementation of such an environment.

- Table 1a: Was a subgroup analysis undertaken to determine whether the same, single respondent put down 'Disagree' for all these sections? If so, was an attempt made to contact this respondent?

- Table 2b: Shows Students having a higher mean score than Deans, on all questions regarding the perceived need for healthy lifestyle promotion. This may represent an opportunity to utilize this enthusiasm by creating innovative health promotion curricula, and a challenge to not lose this level of interest by the time they become more senior.

- Under Discussion, it may be useful to bring out the point that although the Deans surveyed are all from the Healthy Doc schools- and therefore likely to be better than the average- Table 4a seems to indicate that their self-assessment is of themselves as either Average or Somewhat Less than other schools

- Table 5: under Student well-being/physical health: suggest changing 'older' students to 'more senior' students.
What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

None