Reviewer's report

Title: A Family Day Program Enhances Knowledge About Medical School Culture and Necessary Supports

Version: 1 Date: 5 February 2004

Reviewer: Salahuddin Malik

Reviewer's report:

General - refer to guidelines for reviewers
1. Interesting idea reasonably well defined. Most work on medical student support systems, has centred on tutor-led schemes or peer support. The scheme proposed by the authors is novel and appears to be a logical step forward.

2. General areas covered during the interventions are generally self explanatory, however, the authors should indicate the time/effort spent on the various aspects of the programme and also something about the level of content, especially with regard to the OSCE demonstration.

3. The authors should give the numbers involved as well as the percentages of participants involved. How many people were invited to participate but declined? Pre and post test scores seem appropriate to assess short term knowledge however, there is no indication of the numbers of individuals who increased their scores or whether the increases were equal.

4. The results section should be separated from the discussion

5. The authors acknowledge that participants may have increased their short term knowledge without necessarily impacting upon long term outcomes. They also recognise the fact that there may be a selection bias.

6. Yes

7. Yes

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
None

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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)
i. The authors should give numbers as well as percentages of participants taking part. (a table may be useful to help describe the sample)
ii. How many were invited to participate but declined and why?
iii. Please check references: reference 2 Malik actually quoted work done by others – this is not clear in the text.
iv. Please describe briefly how the planning committee developed the programme
Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

i. The authors should indicate the length of time/effort spent facilitating the various aspects of the programme and also something about the level of content, especially with regard to the OSCE demonstration.

ii. The results section should be separated from the discussion

iii. Pre and post test scores seem appropriate to assess short-term knowledge, however, there is no indication of the numbers of individuals who increased their scores or whether the increases were of similar magnitude. (do social factors influence this?)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

None