Author's response to reviews

Title: Critical appraisal skills training for health care professionals: A randomized controlled trial

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Dear Editor

MS 630501130446739 - Critical appraisal training for health care professionals: A randomised controlled trial

Thank you for forwarding the comments of the two reviewers on our above manuscript. We have revised manuscript accordingly and provide below a point-by-point summary of responses to each of the issues raised.

Reviewer 1.

Major compulsory revisions
1. Validation of outcome questionnaire - A copy of the main outcome questionnaire has been added as an appendix to the paper. As proposed, by the reviewer, we would recommend that this questionnaire is made available as an e-resource. The full details of outcome validation process are lengthy and have been published at length in the previously published paper. We therefore maintain, rather than (inadequately) attempt to provide a synopsis of this process within this paper; we would rather signpost interested readers' to the validation paper per se. We have reworded this section to make this cross-reference clearer. In addition, a pdf of this validation paper should a copy be necessary for the peer review process.
2. Need for pre-appraised evidence - [to do]
3. Conclusions - The conclusions have been reworded with a greater emphasis on the implications for future policy of funding interventions aimed at enhancing EBM.

Minor compulsory revisions
1. Presentation of 95% CIs - Changes made throughout manuscript.
2. Validated outcomes - Text deleted.
3. P-values - Statistically significant findings are now highlighted at the foot of all tables.

Reviewer 2.

General comments
1. Validation of outcome questionnaire - See above. We would contend that the outcomes of knowledge, attitudes, critical skills ability and evidence-seeking behaviour, are all relevant outcomes for this educational intervention.
2. Baseline outcome assessment - We believe we presented a clear rationale for the reasons not to include a baseline outcome assessment period in this trial (page 6, para 1). In addition, reviewer 1 identified this aspect (i.e. decision not to include a baseline assessment) as a methodological strength of this study.
3. Self-selected population - Comment in conclusions section now included to reflect this.
4. Negative outcomes of the study - The conclusions have been reworded to better reflect the negative findings of this study.

Major compulsory revisions
1. Baseline outcome assessment - Point addressed. See above.
2. Conclusions - Point addressed. See above.

Minor essential revisions
All changes made.

Discretionary points
1. Low response rate - We have considered this comment and consider that we have adequately dealt with this issue in the manuscript, both in terms of the discussion (see limitations section) and analysis (inclusion of an explanatory analysis).
2. Outcome details - Questionnaire now included.
3. Realistic goals of intervention - We have considered this comment and consider that we have adequately dealt with this issue in the manuscript.
4. Refocus of EBM training - We agree with the reviewer and this point has been included in the discussion (page 16 end of para 1).
5. Cost-effectiveness - The purpose of this trial was to assess outcome and costs trial rather than undertake a formal (or informal) cost effectiveness analysis.

Dr Rod Taylor
And on behalf of co-authors, 1st November 2004