Author's response to reviews

Title: Clinical undergraduate training and assessment in primary health care: Experiences gained from Crete, Greece.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
To: The editorial team,
Biomed Central.

Dear Sirs,

Please find attached the revised version of our manuscript entitled: “Clinical undergraduate training and assessment in primary health care: Experiences gained from Crete, Greece” to be considered for publication in BMC Medical Education.

We would like to sincerely thank both the reviewers for their thorough and careful reading of our manuscript and their constructive and helpful comments.

In response to HT’s recommendation for major compulsory revision, we rewrote most sections of the manuscript, in order to present the study in a clear way and to improve on the quality of the English. On the other hand, because ET recommended only minor essential revisions, we did not add any additional material and kept to the original structure and layout.

Responses to specific questions and recommendations by HT

1. Why 11 years later?
Response: “This initial period was chosen because the essential features of PHC and of the biopsychosocial approach were still not incorporated into everyday practice, while the experiences gained during that phase influenced the content of the training in subsequent years.”

Is this still innovative?
Response: We deleted references to “innovative” training.

Did it continue, did it change, was the assessment useful?
Response: “Our study has several implications in undergraduate training in primary care... However, emphasis should be given to support and/or select the PCUs that undertake to train students.”

“At the same time, the assessment scale that we propose in this study proved to be a useful instrument in evaluating the entire training process (trainee, trainer, training site). Therefore, before participating in any training process, clinical tutors in PCUs must receive specific guidance on the quality criteria (Appendix) used in the assessment of the students’ case reports.”

Was the idea adopted by other Medical Schools?
Response: “Almost ten years after this study was carried out; the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Crete remains to be the only one among seven medical schools in Greece to include primary care in its undergraduate curriculum. However, we know from our discussions with colleagues in other medical schools that they have recently started exploring the idea of introducing an elective course in PHC.”
2. For which public?
**Response:** For those interested in training undergraduate medical students in PHC. We added a clear statement on the aims of the paper:
“The aim of this paper is to present the experiences gained from the initial implementation of the teaching of practice-based primary care in rural Crete and to report on the results of using the assessment scale that was developed for evaluating the course.”

We also deleted reference to policy makers, etc. However we did not elaborate on experiences from other countries, since we kept the original structure and layout.

3. Language and length?
**Response:** Whole sections have been rewritten and considerably shortened.

4. Objectives?
5. Are the statistical results the real theme?
6. What is the real important message?
**Response:** These objectives are now clearly stated (see point 2 above) and the rewriting (especially of the introduction, the discussion and the conclusions) hopefully gives an adequate answer to these questions. The “real important message” is:
“The Primary Health Care course achieved the objectives of introducing students to comprehensive, community oriented care”

Responses to specific questions and recommendations by ET
1. References?
**Response:** Their sequence has been corrected.

2. Revision of tables?
**Response:** Table A is now an Appendix and the distinction between the primary criteria and the dichotomous variables is now made clear throughout the text. Tables 3 and 4 have been corrected. Tables 5 and 6 now have the same titles. (These tables have been transposed to conform with the portrait format that is mentioned the instructions to authors)

3. Row interspaces?
**Response:** These have been corrected

4. References style?
**Response:** The references have been rewritten in conformity with the instructions.

5. Textual and language recommendations?
**Response:** The manuscript has been rewritten.

We remain at your disposal for any further information you may need regarding our work.

Sincerely Yours,

George Bellos