Reviewer's report

Title: Clinical undergraduate training and assessment in primary health care: experience gained from Crete- Greece

Version: 1 Date: 8 March 2005

Reviewer: Erik Trell

Reviewer's report:

General

First, it must be said that this is an important and pioneering study, not only in Greece but internationally. In the first place it introduces and promotes PHC and PHC education as major elements in an ongoing national health care reform, while globally the new assessment instrument apart from its operational value provides a vital step in scientifically quantifying quality. I am aware of no similar project or methodological line of approach, and therefore it is important to optimize the presentation.

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

The presentation suffers from some imperfections, which are easy to repair, however, and in the continuation I’ll make some suggestions. Some of them are major (like the ordering of references) but most are minor, so I take up all points under the next section, because all can easily be corrected by the authors.

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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.

1. Ordering/numbering of references.
OK till 12,13,14 on page 3. But next references on same page are stated as 24,25,26 but should be shifted (also in reference list) to 15,16,17 (and written in text as 15-17). Next, 28,29 on same page shifted to 18,19, and 15,16 further down to 20,21. Then, on fourth line page 4, 15,17,18 to 20,22,23.
After that, at the end of fourth section page 6: 19,20 to 24,26, and at the bottom, 29 to 26, and, finally on fourth text line page 7, 21,22,23 to 27,28 and 29 (in text written as 27-29).

2. Revision of tables and tabular designations.
I suggest that Table A is renamed (and referred to in the text as) Appendix. I also suggest that on page 4 and elsewhere its criteria, in order to avoid confusion with the a-h of the primary health criteria on page 3 are changed to 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and (8-10) as they are stated in the appendix.

I believe that the columns in Table 3 should be 0 1 2 3, instead of 1 2 3 4.

Text of table 4 might be slightly altered to "Co-existence of family structure + total biopsychosocial approach (N%) and average of home visits (hv).

Table-head of table 5 changed to format of table-head of table 6 (better lay-out)

3 Row interspaces.
Should everywhere in the text be 1 1/2, but there are sections on page 4 (first three in data on assessment) and 6 (sixth section) where it is 1. Should be changed.

4 References.
There should be homogeneity of the reference style: year;volume:pages. This is often broken and should be corrected, i.e. in reference (old numbering) 1 (where there should be a capital C in Changing), 2, 3, 4, 6, 10 (where also row interspace should be corrected), 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27.

5 Text.
It may seem a draconic list so far. But it is easily amended technicalities, and the same applies to the text comments, which are more like suggestions. I make them in running order, and sometimes they may have contextual/comprehension purport:

Page 1, last line: its instead of it's
Page 2, line 7 (of text): its instead of its'
line 11: both qualitatively and quantitatively (?)
line 20: , sign after This deleted, students' instead of student's
line 32: Irrespective of instead of irrespectively to
line 34: Corresponding instead of responding
line 40: after record keeping: , and

Page 3 line 16 and ensuing section. A bit problematic. It is essential that one understands that this is a next step of quantifying the quality and in that respect a dichotomous operationalisation of the face and contents value instrument. Part of that is renaming the criteria from letters to numbers (also everywhere in the text), another part is to make it clearer in the sentence, for instance, "In quantifying the quality of records the above list as specified in the Appendix was operationalized using a dichotomous approach where in a slightly different order and with the addition of laboratory data and priority the variables were assigned a value of 0 if absent and 1 if present and so made amenable to numerical analysis."
line 20: 231 instead of 232 (?)
line 22: the ten quality criteria in the appendix instead of the above eight (in order to avoid confusion)
(line 29 - and elsewhere when applicable) change h, d, b, etc to 8, 4, 2 etc.

Page 4, line 4: According to Yates or..
line 5: were instead of have been on two places
line 6: were instead of have been on one place
line 13: Delete several
line 18: PCUs are presented. Delete were later on. Change letters to numbers in whole section.
line 28: the components instead of its components
line 36: logistic linear (or linear logistic) regression instead of logistic regression linear.
last line: . after p=0.000. And then: Therefore the above set of predictors may serve as a new assessment scale.
And in whole Data on assessment chapter: 1 1/2 row interspace and double between sections. And change criteria letters to numbers.

Page 5, line 1: Delete been
line 2: delete seems to well it
line 3: delete some. And new section below
line 4: delete one
line 5: application instead of use
line 10: (B=1) instead of B=1
line 11: Underscoring the coexistence of instead of that underscores the presence of
line 15: Likert instead of Likhert (?)
line 20: delete it was after initial As
line 21: separation between . and At had instead of have
line 26: delete of the case write-ups (repetition)
line 29: delete several. PCU.s instead of PCU. And . and separation to (p<0.001)
line 30: Did instead of do
line 34: delete several
line 36: and instead of as well as
line 39: between instead of among and delete several
line 42: may instead of maybe

Page 6, line 4: them instead of PCUs
line 6: was instead of is. Various instead of a different. between instead of among.
line 12: delete parameters - and brackets around criteria
line 20 and on. 1 1/2 row interspace and double between sections.
line 27: put comma after Greece and after the comma: and further the supply of...
line 29: such instead of these (?)
line 31: disseminated instead of disseminating
line 32: participating in instead of participating to
line 33: quality criteria (Appendix) instead of training topics (criteria. and instead of only holistic: at
the same time holistic and modulated
line 41: elements instead of topics or criteria
line 43: delete their
line 47: Find this report interesting instead of find interesting this report (?)
line 49: source instead of resource. And tentative ending: on a dynamic moment of time when
several attempts in improving quality of PHC in Crete are being undertaken.

Page 7, line 2: consequence instead of sense.

Again, this may seem as a draconic and extensive list, but adds up to a number of small corrections,
some of which (marked with a ?) are entirely up to the authors’ discretion. I think that the work and its
initiative and initiation is of the utmost interest for those working in the field, which is as wide as that
of public helath, primary health care and innovated medical education. Therefore I strongly
recommend it for publication. I am also impressed by the statistical and other qualitative and
quantitaeive investigation machinery and work, and find no need for further statistical consultancy.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests