Author's response to reviews

Title: Learners' Decisions for Attending Pediatric Grand Rounds: a qualitative and quantitative study

Authors:

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Version: 3 Date: 5 April 2006

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear BioMed Central Editor:

I thank the reviewers for once again doing a very nice job and again making very useful and important recommendations, all of which improved the manuscript. All but one of the recommended revisions have been accomplished in the revised manuscript, and my reason for not being able to accomplish the remaining recommendation is addressed below.

**Reviewer #1:**
**Reviewer’s report:**

General
Both myself and the other reviewer made a number of suggestions. It appears that he has followed the directions—particularly for the quantitative data. However, for the qualitative data, his approach is quite unconventional. I did suggest that he include the quotations, however, I did not anticipate that we would append them to the document. In qualitative research they are usually an integral part of the results section substantiating the diagram and the key findings. I really don’t believe his handling of the data in an appendix is acceptable. I think he should be using an article like Turgeon and Cote, Medical Teacher 2005 to improve the writing of the paper. He should be critically examining the way that people like Delease Wear, Shiphra Ginsburg, & Loreli Lingard present qualitative data.

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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)**

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**Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)**

**Response:** As the reviewer recommended, I eliminated the appendix and incorporated quotations into the text of the manuscript, modeling them to the format of Shiphra Ginsburg and Loreli Lingard.

**Reviewer #2**
**Reviewer’s report**

Learners’ Decisions for Attending Pediatric Grand Rounds: a qualitative and quantitative study
**Title:** Learners’ Decisions for Attending Pediatric Grand Rounds: a qualitative and quantitative study
**Version:** 2 **Date:** 5 March 2006
**Reviewer:** Michael Allen

**Reviewer’s report:**

General
Thank you for giving me a chance to review the revision of the paper and the other reviewer’s comments. This has not been my experience with other reviews and I appreciate BMC’s policy of transparency. Thanks too to the authors for their
revisions. I don’t think the additional information changes my view of the merits of the study but it will help readers make an informed judgement.

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

1. It would be helpful if the authors state the response rate to the questionnaire. E.g., on page 10, paragraph 1. Fifty-nine questionnaires were returned (response rate approximately 13%) and were categorized . . .

2. In response #2 the authors state that the quantitative survey was carried out during the same time period as the qualitative survey. However in the paper (page 5, paragraph 1, last sentence) they state that they used the survey to quantitatively measure the relative importance of the previously identified motivating factors and barriers. This and the last sentence of the Methods section of the abstract suggest that Part B was carried out after Part A. It would be helpful if the authors clarified the sequence in which Part A and Part B were done.

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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)**

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**Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)**

**Response # 6 – the authors state that you can’t get meaningful answers to questions asked in an empty room in response to my comment about lack of data from those who did not attend rounds. I wonder if the authors made an attempt to recruit infrequent attenders by telephone or personal contact when they received no responses to the mailed invitation. If they did and there were still no volunteers, it might be helpful to include this in the paper to emphasize the difficulty of recruiting such subjects.**

**Response:** *As the reviewer recommended:*

1. I indicated the response rate to the questionnaire as 11.7% of those attending 1 or more session.

2. I clarified the timing of the qualitative and quantitative studies by changing the final sentence in the “Purpose of this research project” section to state that the motivating factors and barriers were those that had emerged during the first two interview sessions. These were the only interviews that had taken place at the time the quantitative survey was distributed. I similarly changed the abstract by inserting the word “initial” in the final sentence of the Methods section.

**For response #6 (above):**

For none of the populations in either the quantitative or qualitative studies did I make personal contact to encourage participation. Doing so for the interviews would have been outside the boundaries of what the IRB had approved for my research project. My IRB approval was only for my recruiting subjects by sending them a personal letter inviting their participation (the text of this letter was approved by the IRB). No other forms of contact were
included in this approval. The reviewer makes a good point (which I completely accept) for demonstrating the difficulty of recruiting such subjects, but I was never able to come up with appropriately concise language which did not distract the reader from the key items which were learned from this study.

Sincerely,
Jack Dolcourt