Author's response to reviews

Title: Perceptions on the Importance of Gerontological Education by Teachers and Students of Undergraduate Health Sciences: An Exploratory Study

Authors:

Victor Manuel Mendoza-Nunez (mendovic@servidor.unam.mx)
Maria de la Luz Martinez-Maldonado (marilumtz05@yahoo.com.mx)
Elsa Correa-Munoz (elcomm@terra.com.mx)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Emma Parkin:

I send you the revised manuscript entitled “Perceptions on the Importance of Gerontological Education by Teachers and Students of Undergraduate Health Sciences: An Exploratory Study” and reply point-by point to comments of the reviewers, for review and possible publication in BMC-Medical Education.

Sincerely

Víctor Manuel Mendoza-Núñez, MD, PhD (Corresponding author)
FES Zaragoza, UNAM
Batalla 5 de mayo s/n
Esq. Fuerte de Loreto
Col. Ejército de Oriente
Mexico City 09230
México
E-mail: mendovic@servidor.unam.mx
Reply point-by-point to manuscript: MS: 1819560739107387

Perceptions on the Importance of Gerontological Education by Teachers and Students of Undergraduate Health Sciences: An Exploratory Study

Authors: Victor Manuel Mendoza-Nunez, Maria de la Luz Martinez-Maldonado and Elsa Correa-Munoz

REVIEWER 1 (Paul Stolee)

1. Comment:

“They say the questionnaire was pilot-tested and approved by a panel of experts. - more detail is needed here - how and where was it piloted, what sort of experts were on the panel”

1. Reply:

The questionnaire was previously pilot-tested in a group of 10 students so as to verify the understanding of the questions. The questionnaire was approved by a panel of 4 gerontologists. It was personally and directly given to teachers; and in small groups (10-12 persons), to students during the inter-semester period.

2. Comment:

“the indicate the questionnaire was “semi-structured” - I had asked previously if the qualitative interview guide was semi-structured. I do not know what a semi-structured quantitative questionnaire would be, and it may be the authors did not understand the use of the term. This term is usually used for qualitative interview guides that have a predetermined list of questions/topics, but which allow flexibility in probing or pursuing additional areas.”

2. Reply:

In order to deepen our understanding of current perceptions underlying current teaching practices in the field of gerontology, an interview with a semi-structured guide was administered to 10 students –5 from beginning semesters and 5 from advanced semesters– and to 5 teachers –one from
each degree course. Interviews lasted 30 minutes on average, and they were recorded.

3. Comment:
“Needs some language corrections before being published”

3. Reply:
The manuscript was revised again

REVIEWER 2 (Laura Diachun)

1. Comment:
“Although the authors have made significant revisions to this area of the paper, it remains weak in grammatical, accuracy and argument development perspectives. Again, sentences are long, grammatically flawed and difficult to follow. I have tremendous difficulty following the argument of the 2nd last paragraph in the discussion.”

1. Reply:
The manuscript was corrected.

2. Comment:
“The authors do not make an accurate comparison when they assert differences between their own findings and those Diachun et al. Diachun reported on the number of medical students wishing to pursue a career in geriatric medicine. Mendoza-Nunez report on how health science students rate the importance of learning gerontological concepts. These concepts are very different and cannot be directly compared with accuracy, though relevant concepts could be discussed, compared and contrasted. Similarly, the attempts of the authors to compare gender and consideration of a career in geriatric medicine versus the importance of gerontological issues in training are quite different. While they can be compared ad discussed, it is important that the authors of the current paper understand that they are not comparing answers to the same question.”

2. Reply:
The discussion was corrected
3. Comment:

The conclusion section is much more relevant but exceptionally brief. Were there any secondary conclusions? Any suggested areas for further research?

3. Reply:

The conclusion was corrected.

4. Comment:

“Reviewer 2, point 6 “The first quote in the results section is somewhat contradictory and doesn't fully support the authors’ assertion" has still not been adequately addressed. Nothing in the quote supports the authors’ asserts that age is conceptualized as an illness nor does it support the role of teacher in terms of knowledge transmission.”

4. Reply:

It was a mistake in the redaction in the manuscript, this was corrected.

5. Comment:

“The work of Diachun et al occurred at the University of Western Ontario.”

5. Reply:

This was corrected.

6. Comment:

“It may be helpful to clarify that the current paper is not addressing medical students but rather undergraduate students of health sciences. At times, the references quoted pertain solely to medical students and the reader may confuse/misunderstand who the subjects in this study actually are. In the 4th paragraph under background, the authors comment on the integration of gerontology in the undergraduate medical education program but then refer to students as undergraduate health sciences students. Please clarify the true nature of the undergraduate students.”

6. Reply:

This was corrected.
7. Comment:

“Although the authors indicated they had reviewed table four for relevance of the quotes to assigned categories, there are still occasional quotes that seem out of place. For example, it is not clear to me how "Some students consider that the elderly patients are dull and thus avoid them" is a psychological aspect of ageing.”

7. Reply:

It was a mistake in the translation Spanish/English. This was corrected.

8. Comment:

“Change the title of table 1 from "Main problems associated to..." to "Main problems associated with current..."

8. Reply:

This was corrected.

9. Comment:

"Contents" does not need pluralization....content is adequate throughout the paper.”

9. Reply:

This was corrected.

10. Comment:

"Contrarily" should be changed to contrary.

10. Reply:

This was corrected.

11. Comment:

The final paragraph in the methods section should be changed from "On the other hand" to "additionally".

11. Reply:

This was corrected.
12. Comment:

“First paragraph in methods, add "with" immediately before "prior informed consent”

12. Reply:

This was corrected.

REVIEWER 3 (Hollis Day)

1. Comment:

“I would move the description of the participants to the results rather than methods section Please proof read carefully. There are spelling mistakes (filed instead of field for example) and punctuation errors. The use of the term " on the other hand" so consistently is also distracting.”

1. Reply:

This was corrected.