Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 2 Date: 5 November 2006

Reviewer: Laura Diachun

Reviewer’s report:

General

The readability of this paper has significantly improved from its initial format however, some areas, specifically the discussion, remain significantly flawed. This makes the comprehension of certain assertions extremely difficult to follow. I continue to believe, however, that this paper is very topical and warrants publication if the areas of difficulty can be remedied.

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

1) 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.

2) 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.

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

4) 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.

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

2) 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.

3) Although the authors indicated they had reviewed table four for relevance of the quotes to assigned categories, there are still occassional 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.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
1) Change the title of table 1 from "Main problems associated to..." to "Main problems associated with current..."

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

3) "Contrarily" should be changed to contrary.

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

5) First paragraph in methods, add "with" immediately before "prior informed consent"

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance 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.