Reviewer's report

Title: Psychological Morbidity, Sources of Stress and Coping Strategies among undergraduate Medical Students of Nepal

Version: 1 Date: 9 May 2007

Reviewer: Barbara Buddeberg-Fischer

Reviewer's report:

General
The authors report a cross-sectional study on psychological morbidity, sources of stress and coping strategies among undergraduate medical students in medical schools of Nepal. These issues are widely addressed and published in medical schools of Western countries.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
The authors report data in terms of predictors (stress and coping strategies) and outcome variable (psychological morbidity). However the reported study is a cross-sectional study, which does not allow cause-and-effect conclusions. This point has to be mentioned in the abstract as well as in the discussion. They write in the abstract, section results, that the students of basic sciences have a higher psychological morbidity compared to others. In the main paper, section results, subsection psychological morbidity, they stated this difference as not statistically significant. This is contradictory.
The lay out of the tables is not clearly arranged. Our suggestions to improve the lay out are as follows:
- Table 1 and 2 can be combined
- In Table 2: it should be explained what means 'Quartiles' (is is a range or an interquartile distance?)
- The combination of Table 1 and 2 can be done in the following way: First column 'sources of stress', 2 - 4th column percentage of frequencies, 5 - 6th column median and interquartile distance of self-rated severity.
- Table 4: the information should be comprised to the following columns: Column 1: variable, column 2 and 3 adjusted OR (95% CI) (univariate OR is not of interest, p-value is not necessary because of CI data)
- Table 5: the same suggestions to improve lay out as in Table 4.

The paper is too long compared to the importance of the information. It should be shortened in all parts.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I have no competing interests.