Author’s response to reviews

Title: Attitude of medical students towards Early Clinical Exposure in learning endocrine physiology

Authors:

Solomon Sathishkumar (solomon@cmcvellore.ac.in)
Nihal Thomas (nihal_thomas@yahoo.com)
Elizabeth Tharion (tharion@cmcvellore.ac.in)
Nithya Neelakantan (nithineel@yahoo.co.in)
Rashmi Vyas (rashmifvyas@yahoo.co.in)

Version: 4 Date: 13 August 2007

Author’s response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor,
Thank you for accepting our manuscript for publication (MS: 1017870941268933 “Attitude of medical students towards Early Clinical Exposure in learning endocrine physiology”) in principle.

The reviewer’s report said it was version 3 but I think it should be version 2.

The request was to check for language, grammar and syntax errors. I have done this in RED colour. The commas I have inserted are hardly visible.

Regards
Solomon Sathishkumar

Reviewer's report
Title: Attitude of medical students towards Early Clinical Exposure in learning endocrine physiology
Version: 3 Date: 5 July 2007
Reviewer: Marian Walters
Reviewer's report:
“The revised manuscript is much improved, and the authors have done a good job of responding to the critiques/suggestions. I recommend acceptance as now written”.

Response: Thank you

Reviewer's report
Title: Attitude of medical students towards Early Clinical Exposure in learning endocrine physiology
Version: 3 Date: 26 June 2007
Reviewer: Michael D Prislin
Reviewer's report:
General: “The authors’ efforts to modify this manuscript along the lines suggested in the initial review are appreciated….as such I believe the revised manuscript is more suitable for publication.”
Response: Thank you

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

Minor Essential Revisions:

“Careful attention needs to be paid to language, grammar, and syntax, as well as placement of footnotes etc.”

Response: Corrections regarding to language, grammar, and syntax have been made in red colour and listed below.
Corrections in the Abstract:
1. Discussion, 1st paragraph, 2nd and 3rd lines read “case stimulated learning, problem based learning, patient-centered learning and multiple format sessions”.
   This has been corrected to
   “case-stimulated learning, problem-based learning, patient-centred learning and multiple-format sessions”.

2. Discussion, 1st paragraph 5th and 6th line reads “A focus group discussion was conducted with the medical students and based on the themes that emerged from it,”
   This has been corrected to
   “A focus group discussion was conducted with the medical students and, based on the themes that emerged from it,”

3. Discussion, 2nd paragraph 2nd line reads “They also felt ECE enhanced their understanding of endocrine physiology,”
   This has been corrected to
   “They also felt that ECE enhanced their understanding of endocrine physiology,”

4. Summary, 1st two lines read “The ECE program was introduced as an alternative approach to reinforce didactic instruction in endocrine physiology for first year medical students.”
   This has been corrected to
   “The ECE program was introduced as an alternative approach to reinforce didactic instruction in endocrine physiology for the first year medical students.”

5. The 3rd line in the summary reads “The study demonstrates that students clearly enjoyed the experience”
   This has been corrected to
   “The study demonstrated that students clearly enjoyed the experience”

6. The last line in the summary reads “This method can potentially be used for other basic science topics as well.”
   This has been corrected to
   “This method could potentially be used for other basic science topics as well.”

Corrections in the Main paper:
1. Background, 1st paragraph 3rd line reads “Student motivation and performance improves when the instruction is adapted to student learning preferences and styles”
   This has been corrected to
   “Student motivation and performance improve when the instruction is adapted to student learning preferences and styles”

2. Background, 1st paragraph last line reads “such as case stimulated learning [2], problem based learning [3], patient-centred learning [4] and multiple format sessions [5].
   This has been corrected to
   “such as case-stimulated learning [2], problem-based learning [3], patient-centred learning [4] and multiple-format sessions [5]”.

3. Background, 3\textsuperscript{rd} paragraph 3\textsuperscript{rd} line reads “institution.”
This has been corrected to
“institution.”

4. Background, 3\textsuperscript{rd} paragraph 3\textsuperscript{rd} line reads “The attitude of first year medical students toward ECE…” This has been corrected to
“The attitude of the first year medical students toward ECE…”

5. Background last paragraph reads “This paper describes the pros and cons of the various methodologies mentioned above as alternative approaches to reinforcing didactic instruction in endocrine physiology and goes on to describe the ECE program in learning endocrine physiology, as well as student reactions to it as an alternative approach worthy of consideration.”
The above sentence is too long. It has been corrected to
“This paper describes the pros and cons of the various methodologies mentioned above as alternative approaches to reinforcing didactic instruction in endocrine physiology. It then goes on to describe the ECE program in learning endocrine physiology, and the student reactions to it as an alternative approach worthy of consideration.

6. Discussion section, 2\textsuperscript{nd} paragraph 4\textsuperscript{th} line reads “In such scenarios active learning may be lacking”.
This has been corrected to
In such scenarios, active learning may be lacking.

7. Discussion section, under the subtitle ‘problem-based learning within lectures’, the 1\textsuperscript{st} two paragraphs have been made into a single paragraph.

8. Discussion section, under the subtitle ‘problem-based learning within lectures’, the 1\textsuperscript{st} 5 lines read “This is not to be confused with the traditional problem based learning which involves facilitated small group discussions conducted over several sessions where the students form their own learning objectives.
In this particular instance the lecture began with the projection of one to three relevant cases with questions”.
This has been corrected to (only commas inserted)
“This is not to be confused with the traditional problem based learning, which involves facilitated small group discussions conducted over several sessions, where the students form their own learning objectives.
In this particular instance, the lecture began with the projection of one to three relevant cases with questions”.

9. Discussion section, the subtitle ‘patient-centered learning curriculum’, has been corrected to
‘patient-centred learning curriculum’
10. Discussion section, under the subtitle ‘patient-centered learning curriculum’, the 1st line reads “patient-centered learning”
This has been corrected to
patient-centred learning

11. Discussion section, under the subtitle ‘patient-centered learning curriculum’, the 2nd line reads “On the first day of this curriculum the students began…”
This has been corrected to
“On the first day of this curriculum, the students began…”

12. Discussion section, under the subtitle ‘patient-centered learning curriculum’, the 4th and 5th line reads “After presentation and discussion of the learning issues, the faculty gave them a set of learning objectives which the students …“
This has been corrected to
After presentation and discussion of the learning issues, the faculty gave them a set of learning objectives, which the students….

13. Discussion section, under the subtitle ‘patient-centered learning curriculum’, the 2nd and 3rd paragraph read “The students were more receptive to this approach. Based on feedback from clinical students who had passed through this curriculum, they were better equipped to analyze clinical problems, find and apply appropriate basic science knowledge, and present their patients than students from the previous traditional curriculum. The limited objective performance data revealed no major gaps of basic science knowledge.
The challenge faced in this particular methodology was increased faculty time for teaching.”
Both the above paragraphs have been made into one paragraph.

14. Discussion section, under the subtitle ‘Multiple-format sessions’, the 2nd paragraph 2nd line reads “This format is based on the key concept….”
This has been corrected to
This format was based on the key concept….

15. Discussion section, under the subtitle ‘Early Clinical Exposure Program’, the 1st paragraph 2nd last line reads “The total number of medical students who completed all aspects of the study was 56 out of a class of 60 students”.
This has been corrected to
“The total number of medical students who completed all aspects of the study was 56, out of a class of 60 students”.

16. Discussion section, under the subtitle ‘Hospital Visit’, point no. 3, last line reads ‘Vitmain B12’
This has been corrected to
‘Vitamin B12’
17. Discussion section, under the subtitle ‘Hospital Visit’, point no. 4, last line reads ‘under nephrology’
This has been corrected to ‘under Nephrology’

18. Discussion section, under the subtitle ‘Focus group discussion’, 1st line and 4th line reads ‘semi structured’
This has been corrected to ‘semi-structured’

19. Discussion section, under the subtitle ‘Focus group discussion’, 8th line reads ‘audio- taped’
This has been corrected to ‘audio-taped’

20. Discussion section, under the subtitle ‘Questionnaire for students’, the last 4 lines of the 1st paragraph reads “The questionnaire had both open–ended questions, which yielded narrative comments, and structured questions, which yielded semi quantitative data. A five point Likert scale with a score of 1 = poor, 2 = not adequate, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = good and 5 = excellent was used to find out the overall rating of the program by the students”.
This has been corrected to
The questionnaire had both open–ended questions, which yielded narrative comments, and structured questions, which yielded semi-quantitative data. A five point Likert scale, with a score of 1 = poor, 2 = not adequate, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = good and 5 = excellent, was used to find out the overall rating of the program by the students.

21. Discussion section, under the subtitle ‘Questionnaire for students’, the last paragraph, 2nd line reads ‘External audit, which involves review of the data by a colleague…’
This has been corrected to
External audit, which involved review of the data by a colleague

22. Discussion section, under the subtitle ‘Outcome’, the 1st paragraph, 6th line reads ‘understand concepts better…’
This has been corrected to
‘understand the concepts better’

**Corrections in the Reference section:**

1. Reference 6, “Academic medicine” has been shortened to “*Acad Med*”

2. Reference 8, “Evaluation and the Health Professions” has been shortened to “*Eval Health Prof*”

3. Reference 9, “Advances in Health Sciences Education” has been shortened to “*Adv Health Sci Edu*”
Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

‘I would suggest the authors pay greater attention to the section on Future Directions. I would be particularly interested in seeing a more detailed description of how they might approach a more objective analysis of educational outcomes’

**Response:** Thank you for the suggestion. We have not made any change since we have mentioned in the section on “Future Direction” that “ECE is planned to be implemented in teaching endocrine physiology for future groups of students, incorporating their suggestions” and also “In teaching hospitals where many patients with endocrine disorders may not be admitted in the ward, video clipping of patients is a good option for similar teaching”.

We have also given a description of how we might approach a more objective analysis of educational outcomes i.e. “An objective analysis of the effectiveness of this approach could be made by comparing students’ performance with and without the ECE program”.

**What next?:** Accept after minor essential revisions

**Response:** Minor essential revisions have been done. Thank you.

Regards

Yours sincerely

Solomon Sathishkumar