Author's response to reviews

Title: Portfolio assessment of final year medical students: Validity, reliability and student feedback

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Author's response to reviews:

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Dr Lolu Da Silva
Assistant Editor, BMC-series journals

Dear Dr Da Silva

Manuscript id=1957327908107931.

Please find attached a revised version of our manuscript.

We have taken careful note of the recommendations of the reviewers and have included these in our revised manuscript. We believe that our paper is improved by the inclusion of these changes.

As recommended we have changed the title of our paper. Our new title is "Exploring students' perceptions on the use of significant event analysis as a tool for learning how to use reflection in learning"

We have given our rationale for including clinical audit and health needs analysis as portfolio tasks in the introduction. The context in which the research question is set has been elucidated.

In the methods section the information on the context of the environment of the portfolio has been included. Students previous experience in the use of portfolios has been added.

The training given to raters is explained.

We have clarified that reflective write-ups and significant event analyses refer to the same thing.

We have re-written the section giving results from free-text comments giving the numbers of students expressing a particular view. We have sign posted this re-written section clearly.

In the discussion section we have addressed the difference in training between course tutors and GP teachers for rating the portfolios and commented on this as a potential source of bias. We have also commented on the effect of the short time frame of the study and the limiting effect this may have had on student learning. we have commented on the low inter-rater reliability of marking between the GP teachers and the other raters and possible reasons for this.

One reviewer has suggested that we remove table 2. We would prefer to retain this table as we feel it facilitates understanding of the three rater pairs. We are willing to be overruled on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Grant Jan Vermunt Paul Kinnersley Helen Houston