The study submitted by Dana Brimmer and colleagues evaluates the dissemination and implementation of a medical education program for CFS health care providers in the US. Their work should be of potential interest to developers and decision makers who plan to disseminate and implement comparable programs.

However, the article should undergo some major revisions before considering publication:

Major comments

Introduction

1. The introduction leaves the reader without a clear idea about the purpose of the study or the research questions which will be examined. The stated objective of the study is misleading (page 2: “to increase awareness …”).

The purpose of the study might better be stated as twofold:

1) to evaluate the dissemination of the program at providers conferences
2) to evaluate the implementation of various course formats

Research questions could be:

1) What conference characteristics coincide with successful dissemination?
2) How frequently are the individual course formats used?
3) How many of the users successfully complete the program?

Using such a structure in the whole paper would also enlarge the readability.

2. The authors have chosen to include some characteristics of the conferences into their analyses (conference type, geographic scope, etc.) but not others. Is there any previous research on which this choice was based? If so, this choice should be addressed in the introduction section, preferably with hypotheses about the expected relationship between these characteristics and the outcome measure. Such hypotheses would also strongly enhance the validity of the authors conclusions which are solely based on descriptive statistics.

Methods & Results:

3. The authors should also say something about how they selected their sample
4. The authors should say something about the way they analyse their data.

The non-successful conferences (85% of the total amount) should not be excluded from analysis. Rather the contrast between “successful conference exposure” vs. “non-successful conference exposure” should be used to better understand why some conferences are successful while others are not. Based on the analyses of the authors, it is impossible to say whether the characteristics which were found in most of the successful conferences are not as well present in most of the non-successful conferences.

The authors should consider logistic regression analysis (n = 57 conferences) with the 5 conference characteristics as independent variable and the successful vs. non-successful dichotomous criterion as dependent variable. Such an analysis would enhance the validity of the authors conclusions by showing whether the examined characteristics are significant predictors of success and whether one predictor should be treated superior to another.

5. The structure of the methods and results section should be reconsidered to enhance comprehensibility. The use of subheadings may help, for example. Stating and answering research questions may, too.

Minor comments

Discussion

6. The discussion can be shortened and made more readable if the authors follow the suggestions above.

7. Based on the authors’ analyses, the language with which the results are discussed seems inappropriate (e.g. page 8: “factors associated with the criteria were…”; page 9: conference size was a major contributor to…).

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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:
We declare that we have no competing interests