Author's response to reviews

Title: Using drama as a tool to stimulate students in a traditional lecture oriented medical curriculum

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear editor,

Thank you for the reviewers’ critique. They have helped us a lot to improve the presentation of our results and the clarity of the whole paper. But what is more, we could find an opportunity to get feedback from professionals who understood our conditions, interests and the efforts. We have now tried to respond to the critique and have adjusted the ms accordingly. We thus hope this version of the ms will be acceptable for publication, but are of course willing to revise the ms again if you want us to.

Reviewer 1, LuAnn Wilkerson:

- We have now removed “stimulation” from the title. In parallel to this concern we have deleted the sentence “Every lecture can integrate student stimulating activities.” from the discussion.
- The responses of the observing students and performing students to open ended questions were classified under two subtopics to recognize the similarity between them.
- We could not differentiate among those who acted, observed, and failed to attend. But we added the percentages of the students who gave correct answers in the two groups, tested the differences, and gave p-values for the test. We have kept the discrimination index to show that the index of the two questions about the headache lesson was within the range of the index for the entire final exam. This indicates that they were not easier than the rest of the exam questions.
- We have now added explanations in the discussion part about the referred studies to clarify our suggestions. We have deleted the reference number 15 (Berkow R. Medical education: creating physicians or medical technicians? Croat Med J. 2002; 43:45-9.)
- We have now added a paragraph about limitations.
- In the conclusion of the abstract we suggested that “the drama may facilitate learning and enhance teamwork communication skills” but offered no evidence of these effects later in the paper. So we added two sentences to the responses of the performing students (“I got a chance to know my friends better as we spend many hours together for this study”, “I will not forget the funny story(scenario) that we wrote together for the rest of my life…This collaboration was very enjoyable!”) as further illustrations.

Reviewer 2, Anders Baerheim:

1. The free text open ended responses of the students were too short and included many repetitive words. So the authors could not give that much place to the free texts. But the authors we have now listed more student statements as responses to open ended questions for the clearly and objectively readers to self interpretation of the data. The most frequent themes were chosen as they were most frequent or common ones. We also have now classified the responses of the observing and performing students under two subtopics to make it easier to compare.
2. We have now added the p-values in the results section. As it was insignificant it was a remark that the success was not inferior to traditional lectures.
3. Thank you for discussing questioning the term “drama” with us! We felt the same ambiguity during the previous critical readings of the paper. We discussed to use drama, performance or presenting a play terms, yet we were convinced to use drama as it was
preferred in similar like manuscripts. But after reading your lines and making a current literature search we changed all “drama” terms with “theatrical performance” or “theatrical presentation” or “theatre -in- medical education” terms.

Reviewer 2:
- The authors changed the topic. As it was reported “stimulation” was something more than the results measured in this paper. (Parallel to this concern we deleted the sentence “Every lecture can integrate student stimulating activities.” from the discussion part.)
- The responses of the observing students and performing students to the open ended questions were classified under 2 subtopics to recognize the similarity between them.
- The authors couldn’t differentiate among those who acted, observed, and failed to attend. But we added the percentages of the students who gave correct answers in these 2 groups and then chi squares of the differences. It was p>0.05. To give an idea about the success rate of the attenders which was not less than the non-attenders. We kept the discrimination index to show that the index of the 2 questions about the headache lesson were between the range of the general exam. This indicates that they were not easier than the rest of the exam questions.
- As minor revision is needed about the evidences, we added explanations to the discussion part, about the referred studies to clarify our suggestions. During this revision we deleted the reference number 15 (Berkow R. Medical education: creating physicians or medical technicians? Croat Med J. 2002; 43:45-9.)
- A paragraph about limitations was added.
- In the conclusion of the abstract the authors suggested that “the drama may facilitate learning and enhance teamwork communication skills” but offer no evidence of these effects later in the paper. So we added two sentences to the responses of the performing students (“I familiarized my friends better as we spend many hours together for this study”, “I will not forget the funny story(scenario) that we wrote together for the rest of my life…This collaboration was very enjoyable!”) as evidences.

Ethical approval: A: Not applicable (But a permission to perform the study was obtained from the Educational Board of Coordinators at the medical faculty. No other approval from an ethical committee was obtained.)

Sincerely,

Pemra Unalan