Reviewer's report

Title: Using Television Shows to Teach Communication Skills in Internal Medicine Residency

Version: 1 Date: 10 October 2008

Reviewer: kamakshi karri

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Research question/ Purpose of the study:

The main research question that the authors have stated (p5) is to assess the efficacy of using TV shows in teaching communication skills to our residents. Although it is apparent that the researchers are interested in the efficacy of the 'evidence-based' Kalamazoo model of communication (KMC), it is not clear why the efficacy of KMC needs to be ascertained using the method of showing TV shows. I believe that the authors need to position their line of inquiry to persuade readers as to why TV shows/cinema education was determined to be efficacious and how the previous studies appear to be lacking due to their relative ignorance of the KMC in their approach.

Research Methods:

While it is understandable that the study uses a convenience sample of residents, there is no information on some relevant characteristics of these residents. Are these residents aware of KMC approach to patients? In addition, some descriptive statistics of the residents would be helpful.

It is not clear as to what aspects of the AHD session had an impact on the residents. It is crucial to unravel the specific aspects of the AHD session that may have contributed to the differences (pre and post test). We also need to clarify to what extent did the film/TV had an impact and to what extent did the briefing had an impact. This would also help in replicating the current study in different settings.

The instrument (battery of questions) should be made available in the paper. The question of validity of the instrument (questionnaire) used needs to be established by the researchers.

The paper should elaborate on the nature of TV shows, the process of selecting relevant TV shows, and the type of scenarios that are relevant for this purpose.

The paper appears to be too cursory in discussing the findings. The use of non-parametric statistic methods perhaps need some justification as well.

It is common practice to expand the abbreviation in its first use --- e.g. RCPSC on page 6.
Major compulsory revision.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.