Author's response to reviews

Title: Physician perception of doctor-patient relationships in emergency clinics: What roles do gender and ethnicity play?

Authors:

Birgit Babitsch (birgit.babitsch@charite.de)
Tanja Braun (tanja.braun@cdpct.nhs.uk)
Theda Borde (theda.borde@asfh-berlin.de)
Matthias David (matthias.david@charite.de)

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Second Review by Richard M. Frankel

Dear Mona Jazayeri, dear Mr. Frankel,

In the following, you will find a detailed response to the concerns pointed out in the second review.

Point 1  Ethnicity as a measure

The data used for the article (medical records and physicians’ short questionnaire) do not include socioeconomic data such as education status, occupational status or income. We have two sources to address the raised question: 1. detailed information about the socio-demographic structure of Berlin; 2. the provided information about the socioeconomic status by the emergency patients themselves, who participated in the interview survey as a sub sample of the whole study group.

1. All hospitals are located in socially disadvantaged boroughs of Berlin with a lower educational status, lower income and a high rate of unemployment. To assess if the two patient groups (group 1: doctors satisfied with the course of treatment vs. group 2: doctors dissatisfied with the course of treatment) differ we analysed their place of residence by postal code numbers. We found only minor differences between the groups, so that we can conclude that both groups live in similar districts of Berlin concerning the socioeconomic structure, which are in most instances nearby the hospitals.
2. Additionally, we conducted an in-depth analysis regarding socioeconomic differences using the interview survey. We executed a comparison for the two patients groups (group 1: doctors satisfied with the course of treatment (n=362) vs. group 2: doctors dissatisfied with the course of treatment (n=50)) regarding: place of residence, educational degree, training qualification, occupational status, housing condition, and family status. Only the educational degree differed significantly between the two groups showing a slightly higher education in group 1 (using Chi²-Test). Introducing educational status into the logistic regression models, it turned out that educational status neither changed the presented results nor was a significant variable in all of the models.

Point 2 Physician satisfactions as a measure

The study was conducted as a cross-sectional study. Outcome parameters regarding the treatment quality were not collected and would be difficult to obtain in emergency departments as necessitating an additional inquiry; therefore the association between the physician satisfaction and outcomes of care couldn’t be answered within this study. We agree that an especial study focusing exactly on this question would be of great value. Additional research literature has been integrated in the article.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Birgit Babitsch, MPH