Author's response to reviews

Title: Expectations of geriatric patients from physicians: results of a cross-sectional survey among a selected geriatric patient population in Pakistan

Authors:

Taimur Saleem (taimur@gmail.com)
Umair Khalid (umair.khaled@aku.edu)
Waris Qidwai (qidwaee.waris@aku.edu)

Version: 2 Date: 17 August 2009

Author's response to reviews: see over
Re: Expectations of geriatric patients from physicians: results of a cross-sectional survey among a selected geriatric patient population in Pakistan

Dear Reviewers,

Thank you so much for your valuable comments on the manuscript. We have tried to modify the manuscript in line with your recommendations and hope that you will be satisfied with our efforts. A point-by-point response is attached below for your kind consideration. We would appreciate an expedited round of review from your side.

Thank you

Authors

Dated: 17th August, 2009
For Reviewer #1: Igor Svab

1. **Comment**: It is very important that the article comes from an area which is poorly represented in medical literature. It is even more important that the issues of patient satisfaction and patient expectations are addressed.

**Authors**: We thank you for recognition of this important facet of our paper.

2. **Comment**: What is the aim of the study? The design of the study could not fulfill the aim as it is written, because the sample of 380 people drawn from a tertiary hospital is not representative of the population of Pakistan. Moreover, I find it very difficult to believe that studies of patient expectation in elderly population have not been conducted.

**Authors**: The Introduction section and Strengths and Limitations section have been expanded / added respectively and provide important answers to these questions.

3. **Comment**: the authors describe that they have calculated the sample size to be 385. I would welcome more details how this was done. There is an additional problem if they have been aiming at a national sample and making a convenience sample.

**Authors**: More details of how sample size was calculated are provided in the Methods section. The aim was not a national sample.

4. **Comment**: how many people did need help in filling in a questionnaire? Having someone to help in filling in a questionnaire may be an important source of bias.

**Authors**: As mentioned in the methods section of the paper, the data was collected for this survey using face-to-face interviewing on the basis of a questionnaire. Respondents didn’t directly fill in the questionnaire. The limitation of this technique has been acknowledged in the Strengths and Limitations section of the paper.
5. **Comment**: in the discussion, the authors make a series of assumptions that lead the reader to believe that they are generalising their findings to the entire population. They are not in a position to do that because of the specificity of sampling.

**Authors**: Limited external validity of the study has been mentioned in the Strengths and limitations section now.

6. **Comment**: I would welcome more information about the instrument used and its validation.

**Authors**: More details on the questionnaire are provided in the Methods section. A copy of the questionnaire is also being attached with the manuscript as Additional File 1 for your kind consideration.
Reviewer # 2: Lubna Baig

1. **Comment:**
   a. The results are given in the table and same has been described in the text. The text may say that table XX describes -----
   b. The results are supported by data however major revisions are required for making them succinct and readable
   c. The tables should be reformatted into smaller versions; some may be transformed to graphs as these are simple frequency tables.
   d. Discussion should
      i. compare the results with previous studies (done well) in a succinct manner. Presently it is too detailed and reads like a thesis
      ii. delete paragraphs that repeat information already given in introduction (para 1 in discussion, first few lines in the second para)
      iii. lead to conclusions, at this time it is a mish mash of information on literature and the results are not organized for comparison in a logical fashion.

Authors: Thank you for pointing out these shortcomings. We have shortened the tables, shortened the discussion, added two graphs as per recommendation, deleted repetitive paragraphs from the manuscripts, made the conclusion more succinct,

2. **Comment:** Presently it reads like position paper and has to be transformed into a succinct research paper (preferably a short report).

Authors: We have tried to make it more succinct.

3. **Comment:** The presence of bias in the study should be recognized.
Authors: A strengths and limitations section has been added towards the end of the manuscript to acknowledge the biases in the study.

4. Comment: The results of this study cannot be applied to the entire population.

Authors: We have acknowledged this.

5. Comment: The question posed by the authors are very well defined but there are many issues addressed in this paper and they need to be either addressed up front or the paper can (should) focus on only one aspect of geriatrics which is patient’s expectations.

Authors: We have tried to make the paper and its discussion more focused. Whatever issues are addressed in the paper are now mentioned upfront.

6. Comment: The methods are well defined. Heavily biased results are expected as this is a high-end hospital where in the ambulatory clinics mostly educated people form high income bracket seek care.

Authors: We have acknowledged this limitation in the Strengths and limitations section.

7. Comment: They have mentioned the studies done previously however not acknowledged any major study, it seems that they are asking the same questions addressed in some previous community-based studies.

Authors: We have expanded the introduction section to point out the drawbacks of some of the previous studies and why our study is important in filling gaps in information.

Thank you