Author's response to reviews

Title: Developing a Health and Human Rights training program for French speaking Africa: lessons learned, from needs assessment to a pilot program.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
TO THE BIOMED CENTRAL EDITORIAL TEAM

Manuscript

MS: 1849918290260979 – Developing a Health and Human Rights training program for French speaking Africa: lessons learned, from needs assessment to a pilot program

Thank you for further considering for publication our manuscript.

Response to:

- the comments and recommendations of the editorial team
- the comments and recommendations of the reviewers

Response to the comments and recommendations of the editorial team

1. English speaking colleague reviewed the manuscript
2. E-mail of all authors included
3. Summary was renamed Abstract and limited to less than 350 words
4. Introduction renamed Background
5. Review boards mentioned in the Methods section
6. Competing interests section included
7. Authors’ contributions included
8. Acknowledgments section included

Response to the comments and recommendations of the reviewers

1. Reviewer NM

   a. Difference in the proportion of respondents who participated in the needs assessment versus those in the pilot program is quite big. Is this by deliberate design or is it a methodological limitation? Do you think it affects analysis of results and therefore the conclusions?

      i. The idea of a pilot program was to test the feasibility of various educational approaches with a limited number of persons (n: 20, according to the available resources in teachers and tutors); the needs’ assessment study, done through several focus groups and a questionnaire study among several hundred professionals, yielded its own results, which served as a basis for the development of the content of the pilot program! Therefore the analysis of the results is in our view not affected.

      ii. Considering the conclusions: see bellow
b. *The conclusion is rather generic and does not appear to be derived from the objectives and the results of the study. The introduction, methodology and results are fairly focused in relation to the title, but as we move to the discussion and conclusion the citation becomes rather generic.*

i. We have brought into the discussion more specific points (section Discussion, lines 1 to 20) related to the objectives and the results of the study.

ii. The conclusions have been more precisely focused on the objectives of the study (section Conclusions lines 1-12).

c. *It is clear that the authors use a mixture of qualitative and quantitative approach; there is very little illustration of the results using statistics despite high response rate in the needs assessment part as cited by the authors.*

i. The focus groups results are consensus results and need no statistics (Table III).

ii. The training need’s assessment results showed no statistical significant differences when analyzed according to age, sex, religion, marital status, professional experience: this point was introduced in the section Results lines 23 and 24. The homogeneity of the responses is discussed in section Discussion lines 3-4.

d. *Missing labels on figures*

i. All tables have a legend.

e. *Under Methods review instead of revue*

i. Revue changed to Review.

f. *In line and not in fine, sentence confusing*

i. It is” in fine” the Latin expression for “at the end”: for clarity reasons it was removed.

g. *Citation of P Hunt’s report*

i. Citation introduced: 5

h. *Quality of written English: acceptable*

i. Reviewed

i. *Statistical review: yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics*

i. In contradiction with second reviewer; no statistics presented
2. Reviewer BL

a. It would have been helpful to learn about how the country visits, focus groups and questionnaire helped to shape the course content?

i. The course content was directly derived from the priority learning objectives and the core competencies identified in the focus groups and the questionnaire study as it appears in Tables III and IV.

ii. The input of key-informants from partner institutions was requested on a first draft of a course content done by the authors (lines 3-4 of section Educational approaches tested in the pilot program).

b. How might the original assumptions of those offering the program have changed?

i. We had not expected basic “project planning skills” to be high on the list: this point has been developed in the Discussion section lines 8-11.

ii. We had not expected low interest in research competencies and social mobilization skills: these points are addressed in the Discussion section lines 12-17.

c. Was there any discussion about whether the subject matter should be regarded as a priority?

i. The priorities were derived from the focus group discussions and the questionnaire study as far as core competencies and learning objectives are concerned; subjects were decided as in point a, ii

d. What do the authors mean by “implementation of human rights in the health sector”?

i. A new reference is given in Table III: Human Rights, health and Poverty reduction strategies WHO/ETH/HDP05, 2005

e. Other than plagiarism were there any other surprises that emerged from the teaching process?

i. A list of topics is given in last paragraph of section Results: “Yet the evaluation showed difficulties and points to be improved, such as constraints in meeting deadlines, restricted Internet connectivity, time consuming individual assessment and feedback, meeting student expectations, risk of plagiarism in assignments, heterogeneity of student body, choosing topics to be discussed related to local issues, request of residential sessions, demand for scholarships, expectation of accessible databases on health and human rights, etc.”
f. What would the authors do to make their program more student-centered?

i. Several student-centered approaches have been mentioned and implemented in the pilot program: a possible strengthening of the student centered approach would be the project implementation in the community. “Last, the pilot project allowed experimenting the potential development of community projects by the student, with specific community outcomes to be assessed in the future, thus strengthening the student-centered approach.”

g. Quality of written English: corrections demanded
   i. Reviewed

h. Statistical review: not necessary
   i. /

i. Declaration of competing interests
   i. Introduced

Philippe Chastonay,
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