Author's response to reviews

Title: Student perception about working in rural Nepal after graduation: A study among first and second year medical students

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Version: 2 Date: 3 May 2012

Author's response to reviews: see over
To

The Editor-in-chief

Human Resources for Health

Sub: Submission of revised version of the manuscript MS: 5687764736333997

Dear editor

We are submitting the revised version of the manuscript titled **Student perception about working in rural Nepal after graduation.**

We have thoroughly revised the manuscript in the light of the reviewers’ comments. The response to specific comments is mentioned below.

Reviewer 1: Thomas Chacko

The title has been modified to reflect the fact that it was conducted only among first and second year students. We are a new medical school and the first batch of students is presently at the fourth year of the undergraduate medical course. The results of the study have been shown to interested students of the first batch and they broadly agree with the findings. We of course agree with the reviewer that student perception can change as they progress through medical school and we have not been able to address this in the study. This has been mentioned as one of the limitations of the study on page 20.

A brief description of the exposure of students to the community diagnosis residential field has been added in the first paragraph of page 5. A new reference to the MBBS curriculum of Tribhuvan University has been added as reference number 6 and the subsequent references have been renumbered.

The last objective has been dropped.

We thank the reviewer for his suggestion. We may consider writing a review article on this topic in the future. We agree with the limitations of the study as pointed out by the reviewer. However, the large majority of schools in Nepal is in urban areas and admits predominantly self-financing students.

Reviewer 2: Brijesh Sathian

1. We thank the reviewer for his comments.
2. Some of the issues mentioned by the reviewer have been addressed on page 8 in the Methods section. It has also been mentioned that the sample was only of students willing to participate in the study. We have also tried to address the issues of questionnaire design and validation in the Methods section.
3. Some information has been added in the first paragraph of the Results section on page 10.
4. Thanks for the statement.
5. The discussion has been rewritten as suggested by the reviewer and reviewer 3.
6. Thank you for the comment
7. The web references have been slightly modified to be in accordance with the journal’s style.

Reviewer 3: Carmen Dolea

1. The question of not all the objectives having been answered in the results section of the paper has also been mentioned by other reviewers. The last objective has been removed. Throughout the discussion we have tried to analyze the responses and interpret the initiatives suggested in the literature from the context of Nepal. We agree that the perceptions of first and second year student may change as they progress through medical school and the perceptions of one group of students regarding their minimum monthly salary would not be very relevant to policy makers. We could not come across previous studies on minimum expected salary levels in the literature and so could not address this in the Discussion.

2. The limitations mentioned by the reviewer have been mentioned by others and we have mentioned this in the Limitations of the study. At present it is not possible for us to address these limitations but these could be considered during a future study. We agree the study was carried out only among first and second year students in a single, urban, private medical school in the country. However, the majority of medical schools in Nepal is in urban areas and is privately owned. Towards the end of the Discussion section on page 20 we have suggested similar studies among students in other medical schools in the country involving students of all years of study.

3. The questions with clear responses like yes/no or falling within a well-defined response category was analyzed using frequency of respondents agreeing with a particular response. For free text comments the analysis method has been described on page 9 in the Methods section.

4. The symbol $^*$ has been explained. We apologize for the oversight in not explaining the same earlier. The title of Table 3 has been modified. We agree that Table 4 which shows the responses of the student respondents may offer generic solutions. A footnote regarding the relevance of these answers to Nepal has been added to table 4.

5. The authors have modified the discussion as suggested by the reviewer and other reviewers. The link between the results and the discussion has been strengthened. After describing different initiatives from the literature the feasibility and practicality of these in the Nepalese setting according to the authors has been commented upon. The conclusions are based on the recommendations of the study respondents. Due to various reasons specific recommendations were not obtained. This has been mentioned in the Conclusions section.

6. The title and the abstract have been modified as suggested by this and another reviewer.

7. The language used has been modified throughout the paper. The modifications have been carried out using blue font throughout the paper. If any further modifications or clarifications are required we shall be happy to oblige.

Hoping for a favorable consideration
With regards

Dr. P. Ravi Shankar
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