Author's response to reviews

Title: Preservice Laboratory Education Strengthening Enhances Sustainable Laboratory Workforce in Ethiopia

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Re: MS: 1126792169945906 - Preservice Laboratory Education Strengthening Enhances Sustainable Laboratory Workforce

July 22, 2013

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Dear Editors,

On behalf of all the authors I would like to thank the reviewers for critically reviewing and recommending revisions to the manuscript. We have responded to all the reviewers’ comments and revised the manuscript in tracked changes as recommended as well as provided line numbers for easy referencing by the reviewers using the tracked changes version (See attached uploaded revised version). Please see below specific responses to each reviewer’s comments. We hope these responses meet the reviewers’ satisfaction. We have also attached a clean copy (and named as such in the file name) with all the accepted revisions. Thank you and do not hesitate to contact to me for any additional clarifications.

Sincerely,

Peter Fonjungo
Response to Reviewers’ Comments

Reviewer: Helen Nabwera

Major Compulsory Revisions

1: We thank the reviewer for pointing this out and we have stated Ethiopia in the title (page 1) to reflect where the preservice education strengthening efforts was carried out.
2. We agree with the reviewer and have included a study design under the methods section (page 9).
3. We have clarified this in the two last sentences under study design in the methods section (page 9).
4. The authors developed and formatted the manuscript according to specific instructions for authors including presenting results and discussion as combined. We would prefer to maintain the section as it is to conform to instructions for authors by the journal.
5. We have included advantages and limitations of the study (pages 18).
6. We agree that feedback from students and employer would have been beneficial to compare the before and after interventions. However, being a preservice education strengthening program the benefits of the intervention especially with the provision of equipment would have been reflected in the routine evaluation of the students by the faculty staff and prior to recommendation for graduation. Additionally, this was also captured under the 'equipment procurement for practical hands-on training' (page 16, lines 5 from bottom). Nonetheless, it still doesn't provide an answer to quality of the intervention as pertains to the employer. This clearly should constitute future studies for the post preservice program and fund availability made it impossible to pursue this question. We have acknowledged it as a limitation of the study (Pages 18).

Minor Essential Revisions

1. We have corrected to recognition (page 7, paragraph 2 line 5).
2. The study was a formative evaluation of the feasibility of preservice education strengthening. This has been clarified (page 8, last paragraph).
3. The authors feel this was not the objective of the study. In addition to some of the interventions being donations, the other significant procurement donated was ART
equipment used for practical trainings. The equipment procured were specific platforms (by specific manufacturers) used in Ethiopia’s per the national laboratory strategic plan and may vary with other countries. The cost of a specific equipment and its perishable consumables from a manufacturer as we know varies considerably based on contractual agreements with donors or parties, regions and it could be misleading inferring from it. For example, PEPFAR procures at relatively inexpensive rates when compared to other organization or institutions.
Reviewer: Bernadette Rodak

**Discretionary revisions**

1. We have provided the millennium development goals reference (page 5, line 4 from above) and adjusted subsequent references accordingly.
2. We apologize for the oversight. We have replaced technician with technologist (page 6, line 1 from bottom).

Reviewer: Pietro Canepari

No revisions required.