Author's response to reviews

Title: Developing Capacity in Health Informatics in a Resource Poor setting: a Case Study from Peru

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Author's response to reviews: see over
August 10, 2009

Dear Mario Del Poz,

Re: Manuscript ID 2690269511772365 entitled "Developing Capacity in Health Informatics in a Resource Poor Setting: a Case Study from Peru."

We have modified the manuscript in accordance with the set of comments of the reviewers. The following document provides our point-by-point responses to these comments and describes the changes we have made to the text. In the revised manuscript, changes are highlighted.

We look forward to your final decision on our manuscript.

Yours sincerely,

Yuzo Arima
Corresponding author
RESPONSE TO REVIEWER 1:

REVIEWER: Please include quotations to the PAHO-WHO developed Perinatal Information System SIP, developed at the Latin American Perinatology Center CLAP, which allows the registration of over one million pregnancies and births across Latin America every year.

We have included a quotation to the PAHO-WHO developed Perinatal Information System SIP in the Introduction.

REVIEWER: Discretionary revision: Page 4, last paragraph: consider including more information about the Peruvian Health Care System and the percentage of the GDP devoted to Health Care, since this implies a restriction for any biomedical informatics development in the Country.

We have included more information about the percentage of the GDP devoted to health care in Peru.

REVIEWER: Discretionary revision: Page 7, second paragraph: please include the hours of coursework for the short courses described.

We have included the hours of coursework.

REVIEWER: Minor essential revision: Page 11, first paragraph: include quotation to BIREME/PAHO/WHO Center. Include a quotation to Rockefeller and Gates Foundations grants as a possible source of funding for this kind of projects, as the authors know.

We have included a quotation to PAHO, Rockefeller and Gates Foundations grants as a possible source of funding.

RESPONSE TO REVIEWER 2:

REVIEWER: Major compulsory revision: One of the points that I found missing was recommendations for others trying to create the same type of programs a section on things that could have been improved or perhaps things that went wrong or weren’t able to be accomplished would be useful.

We have expanded in the Discussion section including some recommendations for other programs.

REVIEWER: Major compulsory revision: Something else that would be extremely useful would be background on the country and institutions that implemented this program i.e. infrastructure, previous projects, or experience with Fogarty or NIH. This again would help others trying to create this type of project to gauge their own abilities to do so.

We have included more information about UPCH and grant funding experience, including NIH.
**REVIEWER:** Major compulsory revision: In the discussion or conclusions, a section on plans for the future and discussion on how to continue to fund this project after Fogarty would also be useful.

We have added the following paragraph: “And, once a stable funding base and infrastructure have been established, it is important to pass on the leadership; UPCH, and not the US-based UW, has now taken the lead to direct the project.”

**REVIEWER:** Minor essential revision: Introduction, paragraph 2, line 1: I would add “providing optimal clinical care” as one of the core competencies for medical and public health research.

*Reviewer’s suggestion was included.*

**REVIEWER:** Minor essential revision: Development of the AMAUTA Global Informatics Research and Training Program in Peru, Paragraph 1, line 3: Here you explain that Univ. San Marcos was a partner in first five years and remains collaborator since 2000, but previously you mentioned that the program started in 2000.

*We have corrected the year to 2005.*

**REVIEWER:** Minor essential revision: Same section paragraph 4, line 4: “Evaluations of the short courses have been positive (Table 1)” Table 1 shows pre and post test of knowledge in the field, which are not evaluations of the short course. I would re-word this in the text.

*We have re-worded this paragraph as follows: “Participants performed considerably better on the informatics knowledge test after the course.”*

**REVIEWER:** Minor essential revision: Same section and line: The next phrase you mention scores of acceptance and usefulness, however, you haven’t mentioned the scale on which they were measured nor the number of participants who responded.

*We used a Likert scale and it is referenced (for more information) in the following paper:*


**REVIEWER:** Minor essential revision: Same section and line 5: If follow up evaluations didn’t decline, I would place those scores in Table 1 as well.

*For clarity, we have removed table 1. Readers are pointed to the following paper for more information about follow-up evaluation:*

REVIEWER: Minor essential revision: Same section, paragraph 5, line 2: “Visiting scholars … are obligated to return to Peru.” I would explain how they are obligated and for how long.

We have re-worded the paragraph and added more information on how they are obligated to return.

REVIEWER: Discussion, paragraph 2, last line “the industry sector…” should be changed to “the industrial sector…”

Change was made to the “private sector”, which is the more appropriate term.

REVIEWER: Table 1: You place only the number of participants who completed both pre and post test. I would also add the number of people who attended each of those courses.

For clarity, we have removed table 1. We are thus not including the number of people who attended each of the courses. Those are described elsewhere (*). For example, for the 2005 course 43 students were enrolled and 39 people completed both pre and post-tests.


REVIEWER: Discretionary revision: An opinion on why this project has been successful in retaining fellows in their home country would help other plan strategies for retention.

We have added the following sentence: “This career advancement opportunity has helped prevent the migration of the skilled workforce from Peru (i.e. “brain drain”).” In addition, we have added the following reference at the end of the discussion section that could be useful for other fellows: Garcia PJ, Curioso WH. Strategies for Aspiring Biomedical Researchers in Resource-Limited Environments. PLoS Negl Trop Dis 2008; 2(8): e274. doi:10.1371/journal.pntd.0000274. Available at: http://www.plosntds.org/doi/pntd.0000274

RESPONSE TO REVIEWER 3:

REVIEWER: There are some proposals offering distance education training on health informatics in Latin America, such as the AMIA 10 X 10 or 20 X 20--a comparison of the two approaches could enrich even more this paper and give evidence to Global south decision makers on which tracks should their investment be.

We have cited the Spanish version of the AMIA 10 X 10 program adapted from the Hospital Italiano (Argentina) in the Introduction. As far as we know, currently there is no consensus or standard about in which tracks the Global South decision makers should invest.
REVIEWER: One of the program’s strong points is its flexibility and ability to understand the local context by being there and I think this is worth to emphasize, when compared to a distance education approach.

We appreciated the reviewer’s comment and we have included the following sentence in the Discussion “AMAUTA’s flexibility and ability to understand the local context were major strengths of the program.”