Author's response to reviews

Title: Motivation and job satisfaction among medical and nursing staff in a Cyprus public general hospital

Authors:

Persefoni Lambrou (persoula@cytanet.com.cy)
Nick Kontodimopoulos (nkontodi@otenet.gr)
Dimitris Niakas (niakas@eap.gr)

Version: 2 Date: 13 June 2010

Author's response to reviews: see over
We would like to thank the reviewers for devoting their time to review this manuscript, and for their targeted comments which helped to significantly improve the text. Our specific response to each of the comments is as follows:

**Reviewer: Anastasios Philalithis**

The questionnaire is in Greek and is not presented in an appendix, but can be made available from the authors upon request. The Discussion has undergone a major revision to avoid repetition of points mentioned in the results, and to provide comparisons with the results from studies in other countries and contexts, using the same and other instruments. Furthermore, we have included specific suggestions on human resource management policies which could be implemented in this particular hospital, as a result of the findings from the study. Furthermore, and according to the reviewer’s suggestion, the terms *job attributes, remuneration, co-workers* and *achievement* are in italics throughout the entire paper. Our specific response to each of the comments made by the reviewer is as follows:

- **Editing: Abstract: "remuneration" not "remuneration"**
  This correction has been made.

- **Comment: The conclusion section in the abstract should be used as a framework for the discussion and conclusion sections in the main paper.**

- **Indeed, the discussion and conclusion of the revised manuscript are more in line with the conclusion section of the abstract.**

- **p.4: The first paragraph is interesting and informative, but could be shortened to be more focused on issues related to the position of hospitals within the health system, their management and reported cost and outcomes.**
  The paragraph has been shortened in the revised manuscript and clearly states the position of the public hospitals in the Cypriot Health System.

- **p.4 (and elsewhere): The proposed new system is designated in Cypriot Law and literature as the General Health System, not the National Health Insurance System, nor the National Health System.**
  This correction has been made throughout the text.

- **p.4: editing: "Consequently, hospital management is..." not "Consequently, the hospitals' management is..."**
  This correction has been made.

- **p.5: The first sentence in the first paragraph "The purpose of this study was to determine the motivational drive of socio-demographic and job related factors in terms of improving performance of doctors and nurses in the Nicosia General Hospital" sets a very clear purpose that is not answered in the discussion, although the data reported is relevant to this question;**
  An entire paragraph has been added to the Discussion section (page 12) to address this issue.

- **p.5: The last sentence in the first paragraph is not related to the results reported and cannot be answered by the data collected.**
  This sentence has been deleted from the revised manuscript.
• Several (interesting) points presented in the results are not commented on in the discussion section, e.g. in p.9, the last sentence in the first paragraph: Well-established professional relationships motivated nurses in managerial positions and those aged >55 years old.

This and other interesting points from the results have been commented on in the revised discussion.

• p.11: The only comparisons with previously published papers on this issue are essentially confined to the last sentence in the first paragraph, and do not go into specifics: The same ranking...

In addition to comparing our results to a recent Greek study having used the same instrument, an entire new paragraph has been added on page 11 in the Discussion which compares results from the present study to other similar studies (using different instruments) conducted in various countries. For this purpose, new references have been added in the revised manuscript (e.g. # 18, 19).

• p.11: editing: "are in line with", not "are line with"

This correction has been made.

• p.11: second paragraph: It is not clear how the sentence "an alternative suggestion could be to offer personal salary scales to professionals with additional professional/academic qualifications" is based on the findings of the reported research.

Indeed this sentence was a source of ambiguity and has been removed from the revised manuscript.

• p.11: third paragraph: The sentence "The medical staff presented statistically significant lower ratings in job satisfaction compared to the nursing staff..." is not reported in the results but only in the discussion.

This assertion is based on the results presented in Table 7, and has been added to the results section as well (page 9, 2nd paragraph).

• p.12: The sentence "The terms job satisfaction and motivation are often used interchangeably" requires clarification (by whom? where?) since the paper puts forward the (sound) approach that motivation is a specific factor, based on analysis of (also) specific variables, while satisfaction is also a specific factor, measured by a single item variable.

On page 13 we clarify that the terms job satisfaction and motivation are often used wrongly mostly in verbal communication, and sometimes in written as well, and we attempt to make it perfectly clear that there is indeed a clear distinction between the two.

• p.12: editing: "however there is a clear distinction between them" not "however there is a borderline"

This correction has been made.

• p.12: The link between the motivational factors presented in this paper and specific levels of Maslow's theories requires further substantiation in the relevant literature (that may be there, but has not been quoted). Otherwise, it remains tentative, at best.

Indeed, our attempt to link the motivational factors studied here, to specific motivation theories was perhaps oversimplified. We have acknowledged (pg. 14, 1st paragraph) that this link is, for the time, tentative, and must be substantiated in further studies.

• p.13: last paragraph before the conclusion: It is not clear how carrying similar surveys in all the main hospitals and formulating an integrated strategy (of what? - of personnel management?) will "have a positive impact on the quality of the services provided" since quality was not an object of this study.
Yes, we mean a strategy of personnel management. This has been clarified in the discussion, page 14.

• It is also not clear why the introduction of the new National Health Insurance System will create intense competition, and how a strategy based on these surveys will prepare the public hospitals to confront the intense competition. It is such generalisations that should be avoided in the discussion, while a specific discussion of this issue would be more relevant.

This sentence was also a source of potential ambiguity and has been removed from the revised manuscript.

• p.13: in the conclusion: How was appreciation by the community measured? It seems to be a new point that is not mentioned elsewhere.

Appreciation from the community was obviously not measured in this study. It was more of a generalization made by the authors, and has been removed so as to avoid any possible confusion by the readers.

Reviewer: Georgios Labiris

Our specific response to each of the minor essential revisions requested by the reviewer as follows:

• I am a bit confused as to the exact objective of this study. Was it to “measure” factors that motivate healthcare professionals in a Cyprus hospital, and subsequently to determine the extent to which these factors are dependent on demographic or other variables? Clarification is required.

Yes, the reviewer has understood correctly the objective of this study. This has been further clarified in the final section of the introduction.

• The authors state that “The purpose of this study was to determine the motivational drive of socio-demographic and job related factors in terms of improving performance of doctors and nurses in the Nicosia General Hospital”. However, this target is under-addressed in the Discussion.

An entire paragraph has been added to the Discussion section (page 12) to address this issue.

• In the Discussion the authors link the motivational factors to motivational theories in the literature, and this indeed provides a better understanding of each particular factor. However the validity of these factors has been previously demonstrated and discussed. In the present study, focus must be placed on the significance of the results on specific human resource management issues and how these may be applied to the particular research setting, i.e. a large public general hospital in Cyprus.

We have included specific suggestions on human resource management policies which could be implemented in this particular hospital, as a result of the findings from the study (Discussion, pgs. 12-13).

• Since the instrument used here appears to have been used in at least two previous studies in Greece, a “head-to-head” comparison of those results, with the ones reported here is required.

Indeed, the same instrument has been used in two previous studies (references # 10 and 17). However, the first was actually a validation study of the new instrument and no similar results were reported to which we could compare our findings. On the other hand, the second study (#17) is mentioned on page 11 and comparisons are made, despite it also having some methodological differences to ours (e.g. it involved the private sector as well).
Comparisons with results of similar studies in other countries, using different instruments, are also welcome.

An entire new paragraph has been added on pages 11-12 in the Discussion which compares results from the present study to other similar studies (using different instruments) conducted in various countries. For this purpose, new references have been added in the revised manuscript (e.g. #18, 19).

In the last paragraph before the Conclusion, the authors refer to the importance of similar studies on the quality of services provided. This (alleged) association between motivation and quality needs to be expanded.

The association between motivation and quality of services has been explained in more detail in the revised manuscript (pg. 12, pg. 14).