Author's response to reviews

Title: A Systematic Review of the Effects of Residency Training on Patient Outcomes

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Claire Tree-Booker, Editor,

Thank you for the opportunity to amend our manuscript entitled “The Effects of Residency Training on Patient Outcomes: a Systematic Review” for publication in BMC Medicine. We are grateful to The Journal for the thorough way in which our manuscript is evaluated. We herein share our point-by-point revisions in response to the reviewer’s report.

On the decision not to perform a meta-analysis

Reviewer’s report:
Since the authors clearly have a much better knowledge of the particular subject area than I do, I’m happy to trust their judgement on this.

We thank the reviewer for confirming our decision not to perform a meta-analysis.

Suggestion for improvement in the absence of a meta-analysis

Reviewer’s report:
Tables 1a-1d contain the only details of the specific studies included in the review. However, unfortunately these tables currently contain very few quantitative results from the primary studies, and seemingly no confidence intervals or p-values at all. I urge the authors to include such details in the tables, and to rewrite the results section of the paper reducing the emphasis on vote counting.

We are grateful for the reviewer’s additional suggestion for improvement. We have carefully revised our result section in order to reduce the emphasis on vote counting while remaining concise. To provide the reader with detailed quantitative information from the primary studies, we have included statistical evidence into the tables and added the following sentence to the top of the result section: “Formation of subgroups did not create the possibility to perform a meta-analysis. Therefore, we descriptively reported study outcomes with detailed quantitative information included in the tables.” Lastly, we discuss the lack of a meta-analysis in the limitation section of the discussion in order to clarify our decision: “Second, the studies included in our systematic review were too heterogeneous to perform a meta-analysis. In order to provide the reader with additional quantitative information besides the narrative review of our results, the tables contain quantitative information on each individual study.”

We are looking forward to your thoughtful consideration and hopefully favourable decision to publish the revised manuscript.

Yours sincerely,
Renée van der Leeuw, MD
On behalf of all authors