Author's response to reviews

Title: Team approach concept in Management of Oro-facial Clefts: a survey of Nigerian practitioners.

Authors:

Victor I Akinmoladun Dr (vickiebrown2003@yahoo.com)
Obitade S Obimakinde Dr (tasky111@yahoo.com)

Version: 2 Date: 12 February 2008

Author's response to reviews:

We appreciate the comments of the reviewers on our manuscript. The issues raised are addressed as follows;

PETER DAMIANO: The aim of the study was to find out the compliance of Nigerian practitioners to the concept of team care for cleft patients and this was well spelt out in the manuscript. Other issues raised in the methodology are addressed as follows.

1. The subjects were attendees of the Pan African Conference on Cleft Lip and Palate.
2. Seventy two Nigerian specialists were identified but only sixty three responded to the questionnaire. Non Nigerians and Nigerian attendees who are not specialist were excluded.
3. It was a snapshot survey. Questionnaires were distributed during the conference and retrieved at the end of the session.
4. The questionnaire was adapted from previous study by Pannbacker et al [3]. The research question was to find out whether our practitioners have embraced the team care approach and to what extent? There was no official information on existence of team care until the inauguration of Pan African Congress on Cleft Lip and Palate in 2006 and as such it would have been very difficult to identify centers where cleft teams already exist. This effort is a pioneer work which may form a basis for future studies. The conference provided us the only avenue to survey Nigerian practitioners and we believe the sample was representative as practitioners from all the geopolitical zones were in attendance. Other minor corrections have been made.

PATRICK SHEAHAN: Some of the issues raised in the methodology of the study have been addressed above. We apologize for missing out the study setting in the main article. We will however like to state that there was no selection bias as the Pan African Conference on Cleft Lip and Palate was the most convenient setting where a representative sample can be obtained for this type of pioneer study. Other means of sampling such as the use of internet or mail have short comings as only the major Nigerian cities have internet access and the roads are generally in bad conditions for mailing. A gathering of Nigerian cleft specialists
remain the best option for this survey. The conference held in Nigeria and was well attended by Nigerian practitioners. Concerning the homogeneity of the study, it was aimed to survey all specialists who are involved in cleft care. Restorative dentists, paediatricians also have roles to play in the care of these patients. Subsequent studies may be designed in a homogenous manner to look at a particular aspect of cleft care. Other minor corrections have been made.

FOLUSO J OWOTADE: The minor essential corrections have been noted and corrected.