Author’s response to reviews

Title: Attitudes and Barriers towards Conducting Research amongst Primary Care Physicians in Bahrain: A cross-sectional study

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P 7 line 43 – I do not agree that few studies have explored the barriers facing primary care physicians to research across the world, and in your discussion you appear to agree with me. Please adjust this to be referring to minimal exploration in your region, as per the references you have provided.

The statement has been changed to: few studies have explored the barriers towards conducting research in the Arabian Gulf region as opposed to a wealth of information in the West

P8 line 17 – replace the word ‘refused’ with ‘declined’

Done

P8 line 25 – you have not yet adequately addressed reviewer 1’s previous query as to validation of your survey tool. There needs better phrasing to communicate that you have adopted and piloted a survey that was stated to have been validated in the Omani context. The way this is phrased here, a quote from the Omani paper (ref 10), is not convincing. That paper has not provided evidence that content validity was assessed in the original survey, only face validity, so your repeating of their claims makes your method look weaker. Perhaps you are missing a reference. Furthermore, even when a survey is validated in one context, it cannot be said to be
valid in a new context. I think it is safer you just say you used a survey that had previously been used in a large survey of clinicians in Omani which had been assessed for face validity by experts and don't claim in line 25 it is a validated survey at all. Please note Reference 10 is not a proper reference, the journal is not noted.

We rephrased this statement to: “We adopted a self-administered questionnaire that had been previously used in a large survey of clinicians in Oman and had been assessed for face validity by experts in the field”

P 9 line 47: What does “higher physician designation” mean? Given you note this as an interesting result, and in fact for me it is the most novel finding of your work, you will need to explain the designations of primary care physicians in your context for the international audience.

“Higher physician designation” was replaced by “more senior physician designation”. In the discussion we elaborate on this and on the designations in our setting.

Following from the above point, your abstract does not mention this finding and your discussion does not deal much with your major finding about interest in research being linked to senior positions (p 12 line 31-38). Is there other literature on this – if not please state this. I would highlight this more as an interesting finding, including why this may apply in your context, including by moving sentences starting line 18 into the paragraph below so they are linked concepts. Are you suggesting that the link between research and promotion in Bahrain, which may not exist in other contexts, may lead to greater motivation as well as awareness of barriers? The current paragraphs minimise the interest of the finding rather than emphasise it, and your lack of background on what it means to be a senior family physician in Bahrain minimises it further. It is actually an interesting point for the international audience to learn from. This point then follows on to discussion that despite these financial, status incentives, the practical barriers you have identified, which align with other studies world wide, still need to be overcome. I think this what you are saying on page 13 but you don't appear to actually state that.

This has been re-written and amended accordingly in the discussion.
Paragraph 1 on page 13 lacks clarity and needs rephrasing (esp sentence line 6-9) and should be merged with paragraph 2 starting line 13 as well.

The whole paragraph has been re-written and merged as suggested.

P 12 line 40 – Can you please expand or reword this? I think the point that doctors are comfortable with learning their clinical skills from books is somewhat beside the point of your article, or perhaps not yet well enough argued here. Books contain research evidence. Perhaps you are trying to say they would rather be users of research rather than undertake research themselves? The next part of the paragraph is good. However, then (line 53) I don't think it follows that a clinician becomes more evidence based by being a researcher themselves but I am interested in an enhanced argument for this if you want to make this point.

This has been changed to: Research can seem daunting and eccentric to doctors who would rather be users of research than undertake research themselves.

Point noted regarding evidence based practitioners and this has been amended to being better critics of the existing evidence.

P 13 – Where did the Cronbach’s alpha come in to this paper? This is not otherwise mentioned – have you yourselves done some validation of this questionnaire? This is not presented in the Omani paper (ref 10).

The reliability of the questionnaire was tested in our study and showed a Cronbach’s alpha of >70%. We added this info in the results section as well as the discussion. Although this is not one of the objectives of this study, this is important to ensure high reliability of the used survey in our context.

Your conclusion does not encompass the paper well and needs rewriting. Adding the recommendation for future research is not necessary.

Done
2nd reviewer

The recently-added paragraphs "research can seem daunting.........the gaps in our research" need proofreading and reconstruction. The message is not clear and the language is not solid (e.g., evidence-based practitioners? make the various research questions operational?)

This paragraph has been re-written

I disagree with the conclusion. The conclusion of the presented data is not that "the study was able to identify recommendations". This study addressed a gap in a certain context and setting. The recommendations are suggestions and they are not supported by an evidence derived from the data of this study or its reflection. I recommend re-evaluating the conclusion.

Done

Regarding my comment on amending or further-elaborating on the recommendations of the study, you indicated that "Recommendations have been amended accordingly", could you kindly indicate where exactly in the discussion those amendments were introduced?

For some reason this paragraph was omitted in the pdf version. However it is reinserted now and can be found in the 5th paragraph of the discussion.