Author’s response to reviews

Title: Impact of an educational workshop on psychiatrists’ attitude towards psychosomatic medicine

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Dr. Madhur Basnet, Dear Prof. Dr. Peter Henningsen

Thank you for the thorough feedback on our manuscript for helping us to revise it. Please refer below to our point-by-point response to the comments of the reviewers. We have done our best to accommodate the suggestions and revised the manuscript accordingly. As requested we have indicated the changes by highlighting them in yellow. Additionally, we have attached the final version without track changes as we believed this would be more convenient for reading.

We would feel honoured if the paper is accepted for publication in BMC psychiatry.

Kind regards,


Point-By Point Response
Madhur Basnet, MD (Reviewer 1): Overall, the study design is OK. However, there are some points that need further clarification. Some of them are:
1. Regarding the ethical approval, there is no explicit informed consent form and no mention about what would have happened if the participants refused to participate in the study. This should be clarified as the questionnaire is clearly not the integral part of the workshop.

• We have tried to clarify this in the methods and declarations sections now. All participants of the conference were invited to join the workshop. There were no exclusion criteria and the participants were free to attend the main conference. Those who agreed to participate in the workshop were briefed about the study design and consented to the use of anonymous data in the questionnaire. None of the participants who attended the workshop refused to do the questionnaire.

(p.12, lines 270-279)

2. It would be better to apply inferential statistics to identify the statistical significance of the observed changes.

• We have included statistical inferences now. However, since it was an educational workshop and the primary objective of the survey was to ascertain the perspectives of psychiatrists, the sample size was ideally low for getting the message across. Many of the responses were also analyzed qualitatively.

(p.6, lines 132-145, p.7, lines 148-153)

3. You have mentioned in the conclusion that it has changed the attitude. However, the proof for this claim has not been substantially established in the article. The workshop does appear to have changed knowledge of the participants. Whether this change is statistically significant or not has also not been established as no inferential statistics has been applied.

(p.6, lines 132-145, p.7, lines 148-153)

• We have included this information, including the statistical significance now.

The title of the table 1 in the annex has been mistakenly mentioned as "Table 2". Please correct it.

• Thank you. It has been corrected.

(p. 16-17)

Peter Henningsen (Reviewer 2): This is a short paper about an interesting format for educating specialists in a neighboring medical field, psychiatry, about the specifics of the own specialty, psychosomatic medicine - with the goal of changing knowledge and attitudes about the other specialty. The study uses a simple survey format to describe, without a control group, the pre-post changes in attitudes and knowledge in a group of young psychiatrists from different European countries after they took part in a 90 min workshop which conveyed knowledge about Psychosomatic Medicine.

The idea behind the paper and the application in the project are interesting, the workshop format seems to be successful and the paper is well written. However, there are several problems with the paper that need to be addressed:

- The paper does not give the number of participants in the workshop. If the number is very low, the generalizability of the results probably would be too limited.

• We have included this information now (response #2 above). Since this was an educational workshop, the small sample size served the purpose well for an effective interactive intervention. Additionally, this could serve as a pilot study for a larger survey.

(p.6, lines 132-145, p.7, lines 148-153, p.10, lines 230-233)

- The backgrounds of the participants should be described in more detail (country, type of psychiatric institution etc) - in particular it is important to know how many participants are from Germany as Psychosomatic Medicine has a very special tradition in this country (see Zipfel et al. Psychother Psychosom 2016). Opinions of German psychiatrists can hardly be grouped, without discussion,
opinions of psychiatrists from countries where Psychosomatic Medicine does not exist as a separate specialty.

• We agree with this important point and have included information about the participants’ background. Coincidentally, none of the participants was from Germany, which could have biased the results.
(p.4, lines 87-92)

- The fact that this group of psychiatrists uniformly seems to be interested in and has expertise in psychotherapy of one sort or another is astonishing and should be explained.

• We have discussed this result and compared it with the global deficit in practice and provision of psychotherapy.
(p.7, lines 157-169, p.8, lines 170-175, p.8-9, line 194-219)

- The introduction describes only one tradition of Psychosomatic Medicine, the integrated bio-psycho-social one. It does not refer at all to the other, historically even more important root with its psychogenetic models of applying psychoanalysis to medicine. This is unfortunate because it is the psychogenetic tradition which is identified by many until today with Psychosomatic Medicine and it is this tradition which informs many clichés and resistance against it.

• This is completely valid. We agree with this viewpoint and have included information on the German tradition of Psychosomatic Medicine.
(p.3-4, lines 57-74, p. 8-9, lines 191-219)

Thank you very much!