Author's response to reviews

Title: Psychological distress and academic self-perception among international medical students: the role of peer social support

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Prof. Tyssen

We are pleased to have had the opportunity to revise our article for consideration to BMC Medical Education: “Psychological distress and academic self-perception among international medical students: the role of peer social support”, authored by Yukari Yamada, Miloslav Klugar, Katerina Ivanova, and Ivana Oborna (MS: 184665767129466). We have addressed all the editorial comments as indicated below.

Editorial Comment: Please take into account the comments from the reviewers. I would also like to add that the Discussion chapter is very short, and the validation of the findings could be more elaborated.

We have taken all the comments from the reviewers into account on the previous version. Also we have extended the discussion as suggested. They are discussions about 1) a possibility of other sources of social supports (family support and significant others support) to have a buffering effect, 2) a correlation between academic self-perception and local language proficiency, and 3) a possible strategy to improve collaborative peer environment (page 11 line 22 – page 13 line 6 in the revised version).

There could be more reference to other studies among medical students, also to the possible role of social support. This applies also to the reference list.

We have added more references (ref.10, 11, 44, and 45).

Further, there should be clearer cautions not to infer causality, since this is a cross-sectional study. For instance, the conclusion gives the impression about a "risk" estimate and "risk factors", this cannot be found from this design and these data! All findings are cross-sectional associations and the direction of effects cannot be decided from these estimates.

We carefully checked the terminology throughout the manuscript and have changed the term “risk” to “probability”. Further an auxiliary verb (may) has been added to avoid exaggerating the findings (page 2 line 18, page 14 line1).

We wish to express our thanks to the editor for the comments and suggestions, which have served to improve the article and clarify the relevance to the issue of the formation of medical student psychological distress and learning environment. We hope that the revised version of our paper is now suitable for publication and we look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely

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