Reviewer's report

**Title:** Cross-cultural perspectives on the patient-provider relationship: a qualitative study exploring reflections from Ghanaian medical students following a clinical rotation in the United States

**Version:** 2  
**Date:** 9 June 2015

**Reviewer:** Akisibadek A. Afoko

**Reviewer's report:**

The following comments in the report warrant Discretionary Revisions

1. It would have been helpful for the authors to attempt to explain why so many students in the original cohort dropped out. Also a brief description of the level of students at time of visit to Michigan. For example, junior clerks, 5th year medical students etc.

2. Were participants categorically told that there would be a free lunch AS INCENTIVE? If not, then the phrase ‘as incentive for participation’ should be dropped. On the other hand if such an incentive (US$10.00) was advertised, it could actually have been a disincentive and may explain why few participants ended up getting interviewed. The rest probably did not think it was worth their time (see comment above in 1.)

3. Statistically power is low. A relevant question here is, if even all 33 had been interviewed would the result have been different?

4. Have students experienced clinical practice in a hospital other than their major teaching hospital in Ghana? Are practices in say Bomso clinic in Kumasi OR Lister in Accra the same as in their teaching hospital? If students have not been to local best practice facilities then they may not be equipped with experience to comment about practices by doctors in Ghana in general. It is therefore difficult to come to the conclusions we made at the end of the study considering that same may be achieved locally from best practice centres.

5. For first time visiting students, (most often first time ever abroad), the cultural shock of a set up with ‘IDEAL’ patient care could strongly influence responses from interviewees, with a tendency to exaggerate their experiences (especially when talking to their junior in the medical school – in this case the interviewer). This can be considered as a limitation of the study.

6. There seems to be a strong suggestion that the problem of poor attitudes towards patients by Ghanaian doctors may well have to do with inadequate emphasis during medical training/housemanship. What kind of education do students in Ghana/Michigan receive during their training (formative and summative) as far as communication skills, ethics and medical malpractice are concerned ……. Put in another way, how much training do Ghanaian doctors receive on these topics compared to US counterparts…..Would this be a major game changer as far as physician – patient relations are concerned, rather than
elective visits to North America or elsewhere in the West?

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interest