Author's response to reviews

Title: Title: Problem-based learning in resource-poor settings: lessons from a medical school in Ghana

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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The Editor
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Dear Editor,

RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS COMMENTS

One behalf of the authors of this manuscript I want to once again thank the editorial board and the individual reviewers for spending their precious time to review our manuscript. We value their comments and suggestions which ultimately improve this manuscript. We have carefully studied the comments and suggestions and effected the corrections and/or prepared responses for their concerns. Please find our point-by-point response below.

Reviewer I:

Reviewer I reiterated the importance of the manuscript and indicated that the quality of written English was acceptable. He also stated that most of the comments of his previous review have been addressed. He, however, had a few outstanding concerns that need to be addressed:

1. “Just for the sake of clarification, is the curriculum in UCC a hybrid PBL or completely PBL? From my understanding, a hybrid PBL refers to one that is not completely PBL but incorporates some aspects of PBL. Going through the entire manuscript I will like to believe that the UCC curriculum is completely PBL.”

   Our Response: The UCCSMS curriculum is a hybrid PBL. We mentioned this in line 110 – 111 of the previous version of the manuscript and line 111 – 112 of the present revision. The sentence containing this information reads: “It is a hybrid curriculum comprising a careful blend of PBL activities and didactic sessions”.

2. “Problem-based learning in line 37 of the abstract should be replaced with the abbreviated “PBL”. This should be considered in the rest of the summary section.”

   Our Response: This correction has been effected. Please see line 37 of present revision.

3. Authors have not responded to the following comment in line 59 of the previous and current versions of the manuscript. “Authors should also include School of Medicine and Health Sciences, University for Development Tamale, Ghana as one of the "late adopters" in Ghana

   Our Response: School of Medicine and Health Sciences, University for Development has been included as an example of “late adopters”. Please refer to line 59 of present revision.
4. Authors have not responded to the following comment in line 86 of the previous and current versions of the manuscript. “University of Development Studies” should be changed to “University for Development Studies”

*Our Response: The correction has been effected. Please refer to line 87 of present revision.*

5. Authors have not responded to the following comment in line 214 in the previous version and line 232 in the current version of the manuscript. “After the word rewarded, there should be a period. Such as “…rewarded. Assessment…””

*Our Response: Correction has been effected. Please refer to line 233 of present revision.*

Reviewer II

Reviewer II reiterated the importance of the article and indicated that the quality of written English was acceptable. She also acknowledged that the manuscript had been substantially revised to provide more details on the implementation process of a PBL Curriculum. She did not have specific further corrections to be made but re-echoed her earlier recommendation of adding secondary or qualitative data.

*Our Response: This was addressed in our previous cover letter, however, we will reiterate our response. The objective of this manuscript is to outline the PBL implementation process and challenges at a medical school in a resource poor setting. In our opinion, the manuscript has achieved this objective in its current state and the addition of “data” will not meaningfully improve the manuscript. Descriptive articles are generally useful in providing practical guidance. The practical insights espoused in this particular manuscript will be a good resource for educational practitioners in resource poor settings. BMC Medical Education and many other highly reputed journals recognise the importance of such articles and encourage the submission of more of debate type manuscripts. BMC Medical Education describes debate articles as those that present an argument that is not necessarily based on practical research and for that matter “data” (Paraphrased). We seek to publish this article as a debate and have therefore prepared this article following the format stipulated by this journal for debate type articles. In this specific situation, the authors do not see any potential benefits of adding “data” to this manuscript.*

We hope we have been able to address your concerns fully. Please do not hesitate to get back to us if there is the need for further clarifications.

Thank you.

Yours truly

DANIEL AMOAKO-SAKYI