Reviewer’s report

Title: The Effect of Patient Death on Medical Students in the Emergency Department.

Version: 2 Date: 26 Mar 2017

Reviewer: James Cameron

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Line 192 - Whilst I am glad to note that the authors have acknowledged a "non-western context" this still covers a large number of very disparate cultural groups. It would be better to specify which cultural groups in particular are covered by this study for future readers' use.

Line 194 - "Since no intense emotional contact or attachment is expected in the brief ED encounter" - some evidence for this would be appreciated. Anecdotally, many students report a feeling of "ownership" of the ED patients as this is one of the few places in training where students have a major role in the patients' care. Students often have prolonged interactions with a single patient in a dynamic state, unlike brief ward-based interactions. (Noting the comments in lines 258-261 regarding prolonged interaction with longstay patients on the ward - this is a local feature that may bear comment; the average length of stay for patients in Western hospitals is <10 days)

Line 275 - "The experience of having to inform the family of the patient death was also particularly stressful and confusing" I would be somewhat concerned that students were the ones advising family of the patient's death; this is the responsibility of the medical staff rather than the student, and would be regarded as inappropriate behaviour here. Is this what the authors mean? This could be clarified.

Line 399 - again generalising to "non-Western" It would be unexpected if these findings were immediately generalisable to, say, Pacific Islands cultures. Would be better to specify which cultures have these beliefs (or at least which ones are the subject of this study); the current phrasing is somewhat appropriative.

Line 423 - Limitations. Were the interviewers either associated with the medical school or directly teaching/grading the students? There is no mention here; if this is the case then firstly this is a dependent relationship (with all the ethical issues involved) and secondly may have biased their answers. In either case this needs to be declared.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes
Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

No

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

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If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

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