Reviewer's report

Title: Gender differences and similarities in medical students' experiences of mistreatment by various groups of perpetrators

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Reviewer: Victor Mogre

Reviewer's report:

In this study authors envisage to explore the prevalence of mistreatment among medical students and to determine the association between gender and mistreatment. Authors went further to assess students' perception of university climate for reporting sexual harassment. The manuscript is well written and presented however, there are a few issues which should be addressed by the authors to make the manuscript more succinct and readable.

Generally, one wonders why authors decided to assess students' perception of the university to report sexual harassment but not maltreatment in general?

I think the title of the study does not correspond with the type of data collected and methods used. The word 'exploratory' connotes qualitative approaches however authors used quantitative methods through a survey to collect the data. Thus authors should revise the title to correspond with the study methods.

In line 31, authors should revise the word 'access' to 'assess'.

The sentence …types of experienced mistreatment can differ by gender… should be revised to …types of mistreatment can differ by gender…

As I have indicated regarding the title, the purpose of the study denotes a qualitative approach meanwhile authors used a quantitative approach. Authors should revise the purpose of the study appropriately especially from line 118 to 130 of the introduction study.

Could authors explain why ethics approval was not required for the study? Given the study involves human subjects I think ethics approval is required. Was it the intuition of authors not to apply for ethics or an ethics committee exempted the study from ethics application? Kindly provide reasons.
What do authors mean by this statement "This study included (ex-)partners, patients and patients' relatives, friends and 148 strangers in addition to perpetrators who were fellow students or university staff" given that the participants of the study were only medical students? Is it that these groups of people were also included in the study?

The sentence …The first scale assessed…' should be revised to …the first scale assessed…

Authors should indicate the study design and the period the study was conducted?

This is the first time I have seen statistical significance being set at $\alpha = .050$. Do authors have any reason for that?

In line 180 of the results section, authors should not begin the sentence with a figure. The figure should be spelt out e.g. Eighty-eight ….

The sentence in line 187 that reads 'In the following only..' is not comprehensible. Authors should revise.

Could authors make the following sentence much clearer? "Contrary to our expectations, hardly any gender differences were observed in the current study" Authors should be specific on which aspects that they did not find gender differences because the paragraph prior has indicated some gender differences. Their conclusions also suggest that there exist some gender variations regarding some forms of mistreatment.

It appears the conclusions arrived in the abstract vary from the ones reported in the main manuscript. I expected the abstract to be a summary of the main manuscript not completely different. For instance authors said a gender perspective should be used in mistreatment in the conclusion of the abstract. However, nothing of that sort is indicated in the conclusion of the main manuscript. Authors should reconcile the two different conclusions.
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.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
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

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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