Reviewer’s report

Title: Psychological distress among medical students in conflicts: a cross-sectional study from Syria

Version: 2 Date: 03 May 2017

Reviewer: Marta Buszewicz

Reviewer's report:

I think the authors have responded to and addressed most of the points which I raised in my initial review.

I couldn't however find a clear answer to my point (2) which suggested that it would be helpful to have the total number of students approached to participate in the study described, from which 350 responses were obtained. This would presumably be the total number of medical students across from years 2 to 6 of the curriculum, since it says in the data collection section, page 5 that 'all students from second through sixth year were invited to complete the questionnaire'.

The answer to my query presumably lies in the first paragraph of the Limitations section of the Discussion where it is stated that the study used a 'non-probability or convenience sampling method' and that 'a response rate could not be computed for the study due to the sampling method used, but I couldn't really understand this point, given the sentence in the Data collection section of the Methods section (top of page 5) which suggests that 'all students were invited to complete the questionnaire'? I think that this needs clarification in the Methods section if a convenience sampling method was in fact used.

I would also like to suggest am amendment to the Abstract which I apologise for not mentioning before. The first sentence of the Background: states that 'Medical education carries great psychological distress for students', implying a causal link. I would suggest that saying something like 'Medical education can be a time of great psychological distress for students' might be better and fit more accurately with what is known.

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.

Unable to assess
Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
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Yes

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I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
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