Reviewer's report

Title: Emotional intelligence and academic performance of medical undergraduates: a cross sectional study in a selected university in Sri Lanka

Version: 0 Date: 25 May 2017

Reviewer: Christopher P. Morley

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript, which measures emotional intelligence (EI) in Sri Lankan undergraduate MBBS students, and examines the relationship between EI and examination outcomes, is very well-conducted and described. I would consider this manuscript to be close to acceptance, but have a few minor revisions to suggest, some essential, and some optional.

Essential:

1. The authors state, in the Discussion section, that this manuscript describes the first study of EI in Sri Lankan undergraduates. However, another very similar study was just published, in this journal, in fact:

I believe the authors need to not only cite that manuscript, but fully engage with it.

2. The authors have an excellent response rate (90%), but should use a bit more space to describe the context of student recruitment into the study, including incentivization (or lack of incentive) to participate. I may have missed it, but I don't see enough discussion in the current manuscript.

Optional:

1. The authors hint at, but don't fully dive into, the notion that EI may decay over time. This issue is seen in a number of other psychological traits, including empathy, idealism, professionalism, and (inversely) burnout, in medical students. The authors only state that this is a phenomenon of aging or maturation, but there is a body of literature that describes changes in these psychological traits over the course of medical education, specifically (disclosure: some of those papers are co-authored by me). It would be helpful for the authors of the current manuscript to contextualize their findings in the broader scope of psychological trait shift over time.
2. I found the manuscript to be extremely well-written and clear. However, there are small instances where word flow might be improved. Here is an example:

"Moreover the doctors and medical students with higher EI are likely to be more competent with regard to self-care thus preventing them becoming victims of the inevitable stress associated with the medical profession." - this is a run-on sentence, that appears to be missing commas.

I would suggest the authors do one grammatical close read of the manuscript, to fine-tune some of the presentation. Again, this is a very minor issue, as the paper is very well-written in current form.

**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.  

Yes

**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

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