Author’s response to reviews

Title: Validation of the 5-item Doctor-Patient Communication Competency instrument for Medical Students (DPCC-MS) using two years of assessment data

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dr. Julie K. Tilson
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Revised version of the manuscript entitled “Validation of the 5-item Doctor-Patient Communication Competency instrument for Medical Students (DPCC-MS) using two years of assessment data” (Ref: MEED-D-16-00467R1)

Dear Dr. Tilson,

Thank you for the opportunity to revise and resubmit the manuscript entitled “Validation of the 5-item Doctor-Patient Communication Competency instrument for Medical Students (DPCC-MS) using two years of assessment data”. We thank you and the reviewer for the thoughtful comments that helped us improve the manuscript. Our responses to each of the comments are below.
Responses to comment from the editor:

1. However, being internally consistent does not mean that raters would use it reliably and the interrater correlations here are fairly modest. That's not completely unusual for an instrument of this type but it does mean they need to water down their claims of reliability. They can claim it's internally consistent, but I don't think they can claim it's reliable. One of the original version reviewers suggest doing G analyses - that's an option as that would tell us how many ratings/per student would be needed to provide a reliable result. If they want to claim reliability, then they could do something like that on the data they have. They may not actually wish to do extra analyses. In that case, all they need to do, is to highlight that single ratings are not likely to be reliable.

Response to comment 1: We now claim that the DPCC-MS is internally consistent rather than reliable. Changes were made accordingly in the abstract (“conclusions”, line 50), in the discussion (first paragraph, lines 323-324), and in the conclusions (lines 427-428). We also highlighted in the discussion (end of fifth paragraph, lines 392-395) that single ratings are not likely to be reliable.

Responses to comments from the reviewer:

1. The inter-rater reliability information needs to be more appropriately characterized and carried into the following sections: Abstract [for example: line 54 could simply be edited to indicate in () mean ICC=0.61]; Discussion, 1st paragraph: include a sentence explaining that inter-rater reliability differed significantly between rater pairs; Conclusion, a brief mention that there is need for further attention (or something to that effect) to develop reliability between raters. The statement on line 132-134 can be used to generate this language as the describe the situation very well.

Response to comment 1: We added the mean ICC in the abstract (“results”, line 49). We now mention in the discussion that inter-rater reliability can differ significantly between rater pairs (end of first paragraph, lines 324-325). We now mention in the conclusion that further attention should be given to improving inter-rater reliability (lines 429-431).
2. Line 399: Would 'best' be better described as 'most discriminant'? It seems so.

Response to comment 2: For better clarity, the sentence (now at lines 359-361) was changed to “This finding makes sense from a theoretical perspective because these two items represent the core of the PCCM.”

Thank you for considering the revised manuscript for publication.

Sincerely,

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