Reviewer’s report

Title: Attitudes Towards Psychiatry Amongst Medical and Nursing Students in Singapore

Version: 0 Date: 24 Apr 2018

Reviewer: Carol Thrush

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the manuscript titled "Attitudes toward psychiatry amongst medical and nursing students in Singapore". This is an interesting and well-organized manuscript that addresses an important topic. A strength of the study is that it represents data from multiple institutions and has multi-disciplinary participants (medical and nursing students).

Specific comments and considerations to help the authors improve the paper are as follow:

1. The sample is very ethnically diverse. How does the ethnic distribution of respondents in the study compare to Singapore at large? Similar? Is the sample representative of Singapore Med/Nursing students? Please add information to help readers interpret the ethnic representativeness of the sample.

2. It is not clear if the ATP-18 was adapted for this study from the Wilkinson et al version of the ATP-18 or if the authors are referring to the ATP-18 being an adaptation of the ATP-30. Please clarify if any adaptations were made to the ATP-18 survey by the authors. A statement about the psychometric properties of the instrument is missing.

3. In a paper also published in BMC Medication Education in 2014 (see page 4 of 13, doi: 10.1186/1472-6920-14-12), the authors cite/credit Feifel [31] for the item used to assess "likelihood of choosing a career in psychiatry". This appears to be the same item used in the current study, in which case, I would recommend adding the citation of Feifel for this item in the Methods/Instruments section.

4. In the results section, change the first header in this section to read "Sample"; delete the word population.

5. What was the response rate for the study? Please add a statement about response rate; specifically, what was the total denominator that could have been achieved if everyone invited to complete the survey at the four sites had done so. Or at least a rough estimate of the response rate if this is not possible.

6. In Table 1, please expand the response options presented for the last variable in the table (Likelihood of specializing in psychiatry). OR present the detailed results for this item in the text. It would be helpful to understand the distribution of responses for this item. E.g., 21.8%
"yes" seems very high and it would be nice to see the number who said "definitely yes" only, to be able to compare with other studies who used this same item.

7. It is not clear why the authors chose to categorize the ATP Likert type items and present as such in Table 2. Are the items normally distributed? If not, perhaps the authors could just perform Mann-Whitney U test statistics instead of categorizing the items and using Chi-square. Also, the corresponding section of text is a bit cumbersome to read (most of pages 8-9). Simplifying the table to present overall mean scores for the items and the means for both groups (nursing/med students) would allow the authors to simplify the corresponding section of text as well. A Bonferroni correction for multiple testing should be considered as well in this instance. In looking at the difference in proportions most of the difference, though perhaps statistically significant using Chi-square, does not seem to be practically all that different. If there is a strong rationale for keeping Table 2 as it is, please consider simplifying the text/presentation of this information and providing a rationale for why the item was treated as a categorical variable using chi-square to compare the groups' responses to each item.

8. Table 3 / Table 4 results; In seeing that the variable "type of student" was significant at the 0.051 level in univariate analyses, I would encourage the authors to re-run the regression including this variable (and all others that were significant in univariate analyses) but excluding the two variables that were clearly not significant in univariate analyses (ethnicity, academic year in course).

9. Does running the model with "type of student" and all other variables that were significant in univariate analyses in the regression analysis (but ethnicity and academic year in course not in the model) change the results much? Is such an approach more parsimonious?

10. Discussion - Page 13, line 161: The authors state that the majority of students agreed psychiatric patients are not easy to like. This does not appear to be an accurate statement or interpretation of the data since 35.2% is only about a third of the sample; and the responses for this item seem to be fairly evenly distributed across the range of responses for this item.

11. To better contextualize the study results, early on in the discussion it would be helpful if the authors provide comparisons between the ATP-18 mean scores observed in this study versus those that have been reported in the literature.

12. Limitations section - It seems possible (in looking at the high percentage of neutral responses in this sample for the negative items) that the participants' responses are affected by social desirability bias. This should be added as a possible limitation of the study.

13. Some of the remaining suggestions are minor but would help improve the paper: Page 4, line 39-40: change the tense of the sentence to current status by deleting the word "would" and adding an "s" on the end of the word expand (expands). The word examine (line 41) should be changed to 'examining'. It would be helpful to have a native English speaker perform copyediting on the paper. e.g., Throughout the paper, the authors use the word majority, without a "the" before it. I would recommend adding a "the" in all instances. E.g., "The majority of students...." e.g., Page 4, line 46 "were" should be "was". e.g., page 6, line 71, "was" should be "were"
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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