Reviewer’s report

Title: The impact of a psychiatry clinical rotation on the attitude of South African final year medical students towards mental illness

Version: 1 Date: 23 Nov 2018

Reviewer: Zaza Lyons

Reviewer's report:

COMMENTS TO THE AUTHORS
1. The article has been much improved - well done! I have made some more specific comments in each section - see below.

INTRODUCTION
2. The Introduction is much better - focussed more specifically on literature to do with the impact of the rotation.
3. Page 3, Line 4 - check that reference 2 is relevant to cite in support of this sentence.
4. Page 4, Line 5 - 'pliable' is not the right word to use. 'Responsive to change' could be an alternative.
5. Page 4, Line 30 - you need to more explicitly state that 'this study aimed to assess…'

METHODS
6. Unclear why you have changed the study design. You have not done a cohort study - the design in the previous version was correct.
7. Some confusion regarding the length of the rotation - Page 5, Line 10 you mention a 14 week rotation - please clarify.
8. You state that completing the survey was anonymous - participants did not provide any identifying information or code number. As I said in my previous review I am unsure how you did a paired t test - unless you were able to match up each student's pre and post questionnaire in some other way, e.g if they were all given a code number. This needs to be explained.

RESULTS
9. The results are a lot clearer now
10. I think that you could point out that, while there was an improvement in the depression vignette, the views are still fairly negative - this needs to be mentioned in the Discussion. Similarly, while the diabetes vignette scores was lower, they were reasonably positive to start with. It is not a good idea to suggest that the 2 are comparable as the diabetes baseline score was quite positive whereas the depression was not. You must be careful how you interpret these kinds of results so as not to mislead the reader.

DISCUSSION
11. I do not think that the comment on the James paper works well in the Discussion - you are
introducing a new area (the role of the media and stigma towards mental illness) that was not introduced at the beginning. If anything it might be relevant to cite this study in the Introduction.

12. I think that you need to emphasise that there is still some way to go with improving attitudes - while they have improved, they are still quite negative.

CONCLUSION

13. Similar to point 12 - your conclusion comes across as being overly positive - the reality is that students attitudes are reasonably negative and while the rotation improves them, more needs to be done in terms of stigma prevention and reduction.

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?
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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