Reviewer’s report

Title: Evaluation of Constructing Care Collaboration - Nurturing Empathy and Peer-to-Peer Learning in Medical Students who participate in Voluntary Structured Service Learning Programmes for Migrant Workers

Version: 0 Date: 03 Apr 2019

Reviewer: Maria van den Muijsenbergh

Reviewer's report:

Dear authors,

You are addressing a very relevant topic, empathy and cultural competences, and have evaluated an interesting novel study activity, the volunteer project. However, your paper needs major revisions and provide more info especially in the results section. Here I list my major comments, however on a detailed and textual level your paper also needs some refinements.

1. Background.
   = specify the kind of volunteer projects you are comparing with
   = provide info on Singapore and its migrant population as well as the medical curriculum at the start of the paper
   = include information / literature about the importance of empathy and cultural competences, what they include, how they can be improved and to what extent a self-assessment reflects behaviour
   = regarding the project itself: what exact task / responsibilities did the students have? Were interpreters involved? If so, how were they involved and did the students get training in discussions with an interpreter, if not how did they address language barriers?
   = add your research questions
   much of the information that is in the background section now can be shortened

2. Methods
   = elaborate a bit on how you developed the questionnaire, what item of the Fipse did you contain, what new items did you add, based on what
   = describe the method for recruitment of the respondents to the qualitative part (should be purposeful striving for diversity)
   = I do not understand the total number of respondents you mention; it looks like the 17 qualitative respondents are not from the group of quantitative respondents, but that seems undesirable to me
   = how did you develop the topic list for the interviews

3. Results
   = table 1 is in fact table 2 (characteristics): this table 2 is not very clear especially not when it comes to the figures between brackets referring to percentages: of what?
= the description of results is definitely insufficient: you should say a bit more about the answers regarding different items of the questionnaire, and make text of your qualitative results; quotations can be put in a box (they are interesting indeed) , but you should not only sum up the topics but show us your analysis and provide in-depths inside in the different views of the students regarding these topics and relate them to your research questions and the topics of empathy and cultural competence (e.g. to knowledge, attitude and intercultural communication skills),

4. Discussion
= here the text about comparison with other volunteer projects can be shortened and instead you should provide more information about your data in relation to existing studies on improving / teaching empathy and cultural competences, referring to broader international literature.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

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.

No

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

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:
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