Author’s response to reviews

Title: PAIN CURRICULA ACROSS HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONS UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY IN CATALONIA, SPAIN

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Author’s response to reviews:

Liam Messin, Ph.D.
Editor, BMC Medical Education

June 18, 2019

RE: MEED-D-19-00111 "PAIN CURRICULA ACROSS HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONS UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY IN SPAIN"

Dear Dr. Messin:

This cover letter is with reference to our manuscript MEED-D-19-00111 entitled: "PAIN CURRICULA ACROSS HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONS UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY IN SPAIN.” We appreciate the thoughtful evaluations of the paper. In the revised manuscript, we have attempted to address each of the comments and suggestions made by you and the Reviewers. Responses to the specific suggestions follow. All changes to the text appear in red font.
Reviewer reports:

Maha El Tantawi, PhD (Reviewer 1): The manuscript describes an interesting study assessing pain curricula across undergraduate health programs in a region in Spain. It provides useful information and has sound methodology.

Authors’ response: We thank the reviewer for the kind comments.

Pls find in the attached file some suggestions to further improve it.

[Authors’ NOTE: We are copying the comments and suggestions from the reviewer into this response letter to describe how we addressed them in the text. Please see the revised manuscript for specific actions].

Pls add the time of the study and duration to recruit participants plus number of questions and their type.

sth like... was conducted from Aug to Oct, 2018.... using a 40-items tool with close-ended questions

Authors’ response: Done as requested (please see the Abstract).

Pls add at the end of the Abstract/ Methods the stat analysis method use.

sth like... frequencies and percentages were calculated. ... groups were compared using chi square..

Authors’ response: Done as requested (please see the Abstract).

Pls make this clear in the title, aim and abstract- that it is not a national survey

Authors’ response: We describe the nature of our study, and that it was conducted in Catalonia, Spain. We have edited the information in the manuscript to clarify this where needed (please see pages 4, 9 and 12). We also explain why we limit our survey to Catalonia, and how/why this information is valid for Spain (please see pages 3-4). We think that the information provided lays out what was done in a clear and actual way, as we believe underlies the suggestion of the reviewer.
Pls mention that this is a cross sectional study

Authors’ response: The title explicitly mentions this is as a cross-sectional study. We have now added this information as requested in page 4.

this is Methods content and was already mentioned there. Pls remove

Authors’ response: Done as suggested (please see page 7).

Was not this mentioned in the directly previous paragraph? Pls address here in this comment the main elements in table 2 which are how the 4 areas were distributed across specialties.

After reading through, I found that this is mentioned in the paragraph below so I am not sure what this paragraph (lines 12-29) adds

Authors’ response: We have deleted the redundant information. The information in lines 21-29 provide an “introduction” to the information in lines 35-54 (please see page 7).

Pls remove. This was already mention in Methods

Authors’ response: The information has been removed as requested (please see page 8).

pls mention the region where the study was conducted. it does not apply to all of Spain

Authors’ response: Done as requested (please see page 9).

Pls mention briefly the hrs for each country

Authors’ response: Providing this information in the Discussion would make this section really long, and probably more difficult to follow; besides we feel that giving the hours for each country in each and every one of the studies mentioned there would not add much to the facts that we are describing. It seems to us that alluding to these other studies and the similarity of results, as we now do, is the most parsimonious way to present the information, so that interested readers might go and check for themselves, if interested. Furthermore, this study is not about a comparison with other countries. Nevertheless, if the Editor and Reviewer still believe this should be included, we will be happy to do so.
the first 3 lines in this paragraph belong to the previous paragraph. Pls shift it to there

Authors’ response: The information in those two paragraphs is slightly different (the first paragraph in page 10 talks about the total number of hours in each program, whereas the second one alludes to the range of hours) and both provide relevant information.

Pls remove this part. It doesn’t add anything.

Authors’ response: The information is about the study that we allude to [Miró J, Micó J, Abarca B, Reinoso-Barbero F. The treatment of pediatric chronic pain in Spain. Madrid: Fundación Grünenthal; 2018], and does support and reinforce the results of our work. But we realize that the way in which it was provided was somewhat confusing. We have edited this section for clarification.

Replace "participants" at the beginning of the next sentence with "primary care practitioners and pediatricians"

Authors’ response: As per previous response, we have edited this piece for clarification (please see page 11).

I think the authors here are referring to the possibility of volunteer bias which may affect representativeness. Pls explicitly mention this

Authors’ response: The reviewer is right. Following this suggestion we have edited for clarification (please page 12).

Table 1: does this mean "course"? Like there is a biology course, a chemistry course and a pain course?

Authors’ response: Again, the reviewer is right; “subject” means “course”. We have changed “Subjects” to “Courses”.
Table 2: Please explain what this percentage means and the same for that below each specialty in this same row. Are these % out of total for row or overall total?

Authors’ response: This is the total for each area. This information is explained in page 7. We edited one of the percentages in the text so that it is easier to relate the information in there with the one provided in the Table (please see page 7).

Cormac Ryan (Reviewer 2): Thank you for the opportunity to review this article. The authors are to be congratulated on undertaking such an interesting study.

Authors’ response: We thank the reviewer for the kind comments.

Please find below so minor recommendations.

ABSTRACT:

in the background section change delete "a European Country like" just say Spain.

Authors’ response: The phrase "a European Country like" has been deleted.

INTRODUCTION:

last line of the introduction please make the same change as I have suggested for the abstract i.e. say Spain rather than a European Country like Spain.

Authors’ response: Done as requested (see last paragraph of the Introduction; page 3)

METHODS:

There is a ) missing after (e.g., (8,9)

Authors’ response: Sorry for this typo. We have corrected this in the revised manuscript (see page 4).
RESULTS:

section - course leaders opinion about pain content in the curricula - "most of them agreed on the importance of pain education" -- please acknowledge in the discussion section that this is likely impacted upon by selection bias with those interested in the topic area responding to the survey and thus more likely to consider the topic important.

Authors’ response: We have revised the limitations’ section in order to convey this idea in the manuscript (please see page 12).

I would change the term "informants" to "respondents or participants" throughout the manuscript.

Authors’ response: We have changed the term “informants” to “participants, as suggested.

DISCUSSION

Paragraph 5: L2 - change "contents in the undergraduate curricula" to "content in the undergraduate curricula"

Authors’ response: We have changed "contents in the undergraduate curricula" to "content in the undergraduate curricula" (see page 10).

Last para before Conclusions - Here add the aforementioned point about sample selection bias.

Authors’ response: Done as suggested (please see page 12).

Also please expand on the point of how representative the data in that they authors may be able to state that it is reasonable to generalise the data from Catalonia to the whole of Spain but any generalisation beyond this region should be done cautiously and it may not be representative of other European nations.

Authors’ response: We have specifically stated that this is generalizable to Spain (please see page 12).
Finally - I would recommend the addition of a paragraph emphasising the challenges of assessing pain education quality by focusing upon the time spent directly on pain education topics without considering the quality of the time spent on the subject. For example two recent publications from our group have demonstrated that brief pain education sessions delivered to undergraduates can have a marked effect on students knowledge, attitudes and behaviours towards people with chronic pain (References: 1 and 2 below)


Authors’ response: We appreciate the opportunity to know these important and interesting pieces of work. After carefully reading them, we have decided not to add to our discussion as they are about an issue (the effects of pain education) that is not the objective of our work. However, they will be very useful for another manuscript of ours.

AVAILABILITY of DATA and MATERIALS

change durint to during

Authors’ response: We have changed "durint” to “during” (see page 13).

We hope that the revisions we made adequately address the concerns raised by the reviewers. We look forward to hearing from you regarding the status of this manuscript.

Sincerely,

Jordi Miró, Ph.D.
Universitat Rovira i Virgili