Reviewer's report

Title: Stressors and resources related to academic studies and improvements suggested by medical students: a qualitative study

Version: 2 Date: 05 May 2019

Reviewer: Jan C. Frich

Reviewer's report:

I think the authors have improved the manuscript significantly. I will still argue that the description of the sample (placed at the beginning of the result section) should be placed in the methods section (as it is in the abstract). Parts of the methods section (analysis) is difficult to understand when you do not know the total number of focus groups interviews. Recruiting until "saturation" (though the whole concept has been contested) is one out of many sample methods in qualitative research, and there is no reason that studies that use this sample strategy should be reported in a different way than other qualitative studies. Please see the EQUATOR network website: http://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/ that cites two established standards for reporting qualitative research: 1) O'Brien BC, Harris IB, Beckman TJ, Reed DA, Cook DA. Standards for reporting qualitative research: a synthesis of recommendations. Acad Med. 2014;89(9):1245-1251. (see table 1, standard 12), 2) Tong A, Sainsbury P, Craig J. Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ): a 32-item checklist for interviews and focus groups. Int J Qual Health Care. 2007;19(6):349-357. (see table 1, 32-item checklist).

I think the result section is easier to read with illustrating quotes. I did not fint the additional file #2. I question if additional quotes are necessary. I want to stress that quotes are not proofs, they simply illustrate generalisations the researchers make. When citiing quotes, I think it would be more apporiate to place the "tag" after the quote: " ...." (Focus group (FG) 4 - Study year (Y) 1). Try to ground quotes even better in the text. Be explicit on what you want to illustrate.
I think the discussion of methods should focus on criteria associated with qualitative research. It would be somewhat strange in the methods section of an epidemiological study to write: "Epidemiological studies do not aim to explore human experiences and stories ... " (cf. "Qualitative research cannot necessarily claim to yield representative or generalizable findings. does not aim to be representative or generalizable, but Instead, the aim is to explore the full breadth of diverse potential opinions and experiences"). I will advice the authors to focus on criteria such as validity (to what extent the study was able to generate representative data of relevance for the aim) and transferability (rather than generalizability). I think the discussions of methods will be better if they discuss the study in relation to these crieria. What possible implications does limiting the recruitment to one medical school have for the validity of the study? (more in-depth understanding of one setting, but vulnerable to special characteristics with this particular school). How does the study design (recruiting from one site) influence the transferability of the findings? Etc.

I like the figure, but some factors could be more explicit - in which ways do administrative staff, teaching staff and fellow students acts as stressors?

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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published
Declaration of competing interests

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

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal.