Reviewer’s report

Title: Attitudes of Chinese health sciences postgraduate students' to the use of information and communication technology in global health research

Version: 0 Date: 30 Jul 2019

Reviewer: Reviewer 2

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PEER REVIEWER ASSESSMENTS:

OBJECTIVE - Full research articles: is there a clear objective that addresses a testable research question(s) (brief or other article types: is there a clear objective)?

Yes - there is a clear objective

DESIGN - Is the current approach (including controls and analysis protocols) appropriate for the objective?

Yes - the approach is appropriate

EXECUTION - Are the experiments and analyses performed with technical rigor to allow confidence in the results?

Yes - experiments and analyses were performed appropriately

STATISTICS - Is the use of statistics in the manuscript appropriate?

Yes - appropriate statistical analyses have been used in the study

INTERPRETATION - Is the current interpretation/discussion of the results reasonable and not overstated?

Yes - the author's interpretation is reasonable
OVERALL MANUSCRIPT POTENTIAL - Is the current version of this work technically sound? If not, can revisions be made to make the work technically sound?

Yes - current version is technically sound

PEER REVIEWER COMMENTS:

GENERAL COMMENTS: Although there are no major revisions suggested, there are some points that I would like the authors to address in their paper, in order to make it more easily accessible to a larger audience:

1. The background to ICT usage in the study population:

I would like the authors to give a little more context on the social and technological background because of the implications of the very low figures. The authors define ICT reasonably broadly (there is nothing wrong with their definition) as "a collection of technologies and applications that are used to process, store and disseminate information to a wide variety of users or clients." Further, in their description for the participants, "ICT use was defined as using any ICT and/or biomedical informatics tools in their current research activities." This would encompass very basic tools like a word-processor, spreadsheet, email, and elementary Internet (even a simple Google search). The figures, however, show that 30% of the students have never used ICT in their research, and this would indicate an extremely low usage of basic ICT. I understand that some of the universities are in a "developing" region, but these figures are unexpected.

If this is the case (and it may well be, as these figures are supported by the figures on cell-phones), perhaps the authors could talk just a little about the technological background of the universities, because I think many readers will be surprised at the very low usage of ICT for research, and may ask: "Given that 30% of the students are not using ICT in the 21st century, how are they doing their research?" The issue that is also raised here, however, is this: If these students are hardly using ICT in their research, then how did they complete the online questionnaire? It may also be that the definition of ICT is not as basic as I am assuming, and needs some further explanation.

Other minor (mostly language slips):

* "Data was" should be "Data were"

* "used or planed to use" should be "used or planned to use" (this error occurs in many places in the manuscript)
Overall, a well-conducted piece of research. The authors have stated their goals clearly, performed the task, presented their results clearly, acknowledged the limitations, and drawn reasonable conclusions. I do not see any major flaws in the paper.

Overall, the paper allows for completion of a broader global picture of ICT usage by medical students in their research, by giving some insight into such usage in China.

**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.

Yes

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

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If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

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Needs some language corrections before being published

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