Author’s response to reviews

Title: Increased average number of medical publications per interviewee from 2009 to 2018: a study of 100 interviewees to an academic gastroenterology fellowship program

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Author’s response to reviews:

POINT-BY-POINT RESPONSE LETTER for revisions 2 & 3

October 11, 2019

Esther Fagelson
BMC Medical Education

Dear Esther:
RE Manuscript #: MEED-D-19-00416R2 submitted to BMC Medical Education. Current title: “Increased average number of medical publications per interviewee from 2009 to 2018: a study of 100 interviewees to an academic gastroenterology fellowship program” by Zaid Imam, M.B.B.S; and Mitchell S. Cappell, M.D., Ph.D.

Thank you for your careful review and insightful comments on this manuscript. We have thoroughly revised the manuscript in accord with the reviewers’ comments as follows.

Editor Comments:
1. Please provide a list of all the abbreviations used in the manuscript. This list should be placed just before the Declarations section. All abbreviations should still be defined in the text at first use.
RESPONSE: As requested, a list of abbreviations is provided just before the Declarations section, as follows (on p. 10):
List of all abbreviations used in the manuscript:
GI – gastroenterology
USMLE – United States Medical Licensing Examination
CK – clinical knowledge
IM – internal medicine
WBH-RO – William Beaumont Hospital at Royal Oak
ERCP- endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography
U.S. – United States
ACGME – Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education
IRB – Institutional Review Board
MD – medical doctor (allopathic)
DO – doctor of osteopathy
COMLEX – Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination
NBME – National Board of Medical Examiners
AMGs – American medical school graduates
ECFMG – Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates
FMGs – foreign medical school graduates
IBM – International Business Machines
SPSS – Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
NRMP – National Residency Matching Program
N – number
S.D. – standard deviation
SEM – standard error of the mean
IQR – interquartile range

2. We note that you have not included a ‘Funding’ section in the Declarations. All sources of funding for the research reported should be declared. If no funding was obtained for your study we still require this section to be included with the statement “No funding was obtained for this study”. Please note the role of the funding body in the design of the study and collection, analysis, and interpretation of data and in writing the manuscript should be declared in the Funding section.
RESPONSE: As per the criticism the following has been added (Declarations section, p. 11, near bottom):
Funding: No funding was obtained for this study.

3. Please represent authors’ names using their full initials, not their full name, in the Authors’ Contributions section. If there are any duplicated initials, please differentiate them to make it clear that the initials refer to separate authors.
RESPONSE: As per criticism 3, the Author’s contributions section has been changed to use only initials rather than full names, as follows (Declarations section, p. 11, bottom):
CHANGED TO:
Authors’ contributions: Dr. ZI wrote a preliminary draft of the manuscript introduction and results, and performed all the preliminary statistical calculations. Dr. MSC initiated this study, compiled all the primary data as Program Director of the Gastroenterology Fellowship, extensively revised the Introduction and Results, wrote most of the Discussion section, and acted as mentor for Dr. ZI.

CHANGED FROM:
Authors’ contributions: Dr. Imam wrote a preliminary draft of the manuscript introduction and results, and performed all the preliminary statistical calculations. Dr. Cappell initiated this study, compiled all the primary data as Program Director of the Gastroenterology Fellowship, extensively revised the Introduction and Results, wrote most of the Discussion section, and acted as mentor for Dr. Imam.
4. Please put your responses to the reviewers’/editors’ comments in the Response to Reviewers box in Editorial Manager. Please do not upload a separate letter. At this stage, please upload your manuscript as a single, final, clean version that does not contain any tracked changes, comments, highlights, strikethroughs or text in different colours. All relevant tables/figures/additional files should also be clean versions. Additional files should remain uploaded as separate files. Please ensure that all figures, tables and additional/supplementary files are cited within the text.

RESPONSE: As per the editorial request, the responses to the reviewers’/editors’ comments are uploaded in the Response to Reviewers box, and not as a separate letter.

RESPONSE: As per the editorial request, the manuscript is uploaded as a single final, clean version and no version with tracked changes is submitted.

Warm regards,
Mitchell S. Cappell, M.D., Ph.D.
Senior author
October 7, 2019

Dr. Upreet Dhaliwal
Editor,
BMC Medical Education

Dear Dr. Dhaliwal:

RE Manuscript #: MEED-D-19-00416R1 submitted to BMC Medical Education. Current title: “A large and statistically significant increase in mean number of medical publications per interviewee from 2009 to 2018: a study of 100 interviewees to an academic gastroenterology fellowship program” by Zaid Imam, M.B.B.S; and Mitchell S. Cappell, M.D., Ph.D.

Thank you for your careful review and insightful comments on this manuscript. We have thoroughly revised the manuscript in accord with the reviewers’ comments as follows. As an aid in reviewing the revisions we have supplied two versions of the revised paper: a version identified as final for publication and a version identified as having highlighted changes.

Your manuscript "A large and statistically significant increase....to an academic gastroenterology fellowship program" (MEED-D-19-00416R1) has been assessed by our reviewers. Based on these reports, and my own assessment as Editor, I am pleased to inform you that it is potentially acceptable for publication in BMC Medical Education, once you have carried out some essential revisions suggested by our reviewers.

Reviewer reports: Amir Khan (Reviewer 2): The authors should be complimented for submitting appropriate revisions. However there are some minor changes to be done as given below:

1. Title. Mentioned: "A large and statistically significant increase in mean number of medical publications per interviewee from 2009 to 2018: a study of 100 interviewees to an academic gastroenterology fellowship program" Comment: Title should avoid the phrases: 'A large and statistically significant' AND 'mean number'. These are statistical terms which are not needed in the title.

CHANGED TO (Title) 0n p. 1, Top:
Increased average number of medical publications per interviewee from 2009 to 2018: a study of 100 interviewees to an academic gastroenterology fellowship program

CHANGED FROM:
A large and statistically significant increase in mean number of medical publications per interviewee from 2009 to 2018: a study of 100 interviewees to an academic gastroenterology fellowship program

2. Background in Abstract: Mentioned: Gastroenterology fellowship positions are extremely competitive. Comment: This does not justify the objective of the study. Please rewrite.
CHANGED TO (Abstract [Background]) on p. 2, line 1-2:
Background: Gastroenterology fellowship candidates may strive to improve their qualifications for this extremely competitive fellowship.

CHANGED FROM:
Background: Gastroenterology fellowship positions are extremely competitive.

3. Results. Mentioned: The statistical significance of these time trends (for 2009-2011 versus 2016-2018): across the sample of 100 interviewees was analyzed using non-parametric statistics because the number of abstracts, articles, and publications per interviewee per annum was demonstrated to have nonparametric (non-normal) distributions by direct visual inspection of histograms, of Q-Q plots, and of box plots. Shapiro-Wilk's test also showed a non-normal distribution (p<0.0001 for normal distribution, individually for abstracts, articles, or publications).
Comment: The following component need not be mentioned in results. It should be mentioned in the Statistics section of methods section: ..."was analyzed using non-parametric statistics because the number of abstracts, articles, and publications per interviewee per annum was demonstrated to have nonparametric (non-normal) distributions by direct visual inspection of histograms, of Q-Q plots, and of box plots. Shapiro-Wilk’s test also showed a non-normal distribution (p<0.0001, for normal distribution, individually for abstracts, articles, or publications)." The abovementioned change in results section is needed at many places.

CHANGED TO (Added to Methods section [Statistical analysis]) on p. 5, Bottom:
Statistical significance of time trends for 2009-2011 versus 2016-2018 across the sample of 100 interviewees was analyzed using non-parametric statistics because the number of abstracts, articles, and publications per interviewee per annum was demonstrated to have nonparametric (non-normal) distributions by direct visual inspection of histograms, of Q-Q plots, and of box plots. Shapiro-Wilk’s test also showed a non-normal distribution (p<0.0001, for normal distribution, individually for abstracts, articles, or publications).
CHANGED FROM: (Deleted from Results section) p. 6, near Bottom:
The statistical significance of these time trends (for 2009-2011 versus 2016-2018): across the sample of 100 interviewees was analyzed using non-parametric statistics because the number of abstracts, articles, and publications per interviewee per annum was demonstrated to have nonparametric (non-normal) distributions by direct visual inspection of histograms, of Q-Q plots, and of box plots. Shapiro-Wilk's test also showed a non-normal distribution (p<0.0001 for normal distribution, individually for abstracts, articles, or publications).
I hope I performed all your requested revisions, but I will be pleased to perform any other revisions necessary for publication in this prestigious journal.

Warm regards,
Mitchell S. Cappell, M.D., Ph.D.
Senior author