Reviewer's report

Title: Taking care of our Future Doctors A Service Evaluation of a Medical Student Mental Health Service

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Reviewer: Jeffrey S Winseman

Reviewer's report:

BMC Medical Education Peer Review of "Taking care of our future doctors: A service evaluation of a clinical student mental health service"
This article is highly relevant and will be useful to readers of BMC Medical Education.

General Comments:

The use of the word "clinical" throughout the manuscript is confusing. For international readers it is not clear what this means. The authors also use "clinical" as a descriptor during treatment and it is not clear what "clinical" means in this context.

Specific Comments:

Abstract methods: briefly mention which statistical methods were used.
Abstract Line 43: "were significantly reduced with functioning improved" is unclear
Abstract line 52: consider "Students who used the services showed marked improvements…"
Abstract line 53-54: That the students improved and were able to continue their studies seems to me the bare minimum the service provided - consider a more meaningful concluding statement describing what the service provided to students.

Background:

Background Line 5: perhaps avoid beginning the first sentence with the word "there"

Methods:

In the "CSMHS" section, please describe the difference between being seen by psychiatry and being seen by psychology.
Methods page 5 line 4: Rating scales are mentioned as being repeated ("students repeat the scales") so the reader needs to see earlier in this section when they were initially completed, and which scales were used. Since you describe them a bit later perhaps the reader could be referred below after you name them.
Methods page 5 line 1: I'm curious why insight-oriented psychotherapy (many forms of which are also evidence-based therapies) is not used by the service - perhaps this should be mentioned? Methods - "Service evaluation" section lines 48-54: please add when the scales were administered
Methods page 6 line 50: "...falling in the clinical range of anxiety and depression..." this is unclear, see general comment above. Many readers will not know what this means.

Methods page 7 lines 16-17: when describing the 5 point rating scale, consider saying "where 1=x and 5=y."

Results:

Results page 7 line 33: see above general comments, the use of the word "clinical" here is confusing

Results page 7 lines 35-38: are these percentages of the entire school of medicine student body? These needs to be stated more clearly and the denominator should be clearly described. This should be addressed in the Discussion section - it seems a low percentage of students; what do other medical schools report?

Results page 7 lines 46-47: consider deleting "and were therefore included in this service evaluation."

Results - "Treatment delivery" section: the first paragraph is unclear. What does "the number of days that students stayed on psychiatry and psychology" mean? The final sentence of the first paragraph is cumbersome and not entirely clear.

Results - "Academic Outcomes" section: How many total students at Univ of Cambridge intermitted from their studies during the service evaluation period? i.e., what percentage of all intermitted students was comprised of students seen in the mental health service?

Results - "Clinical outcomes" section, page 9 line 18-20: "clinical range to non-clinical range" is unclear, as is "became non-clinical" and "became clinical" - see above general comments.

Results page 9 line 43: how was the "thematic analysis" conducted? This needs to be explained in the Methods section.

Discussion:

Discussion page 9 line 54 - should be "reported"

Discussion page 9 line 56: should say more about what other medical schools have done (see above comment) and also more is needed on how Univ of Cambridge compares with other medical schools' mental health services - the authors might consider referencing US medical schools who have published data on this.

Discussion page 10 line 1 "clinical students" - not sure what this means

Discussion page 10 lines 13-14 "Of the sample studied, 61.8% of our sample developed mental health issues, after starting the medical course.” Do you mean that 61.8% of the 89 students who participated in the service evaluation had mental health problems AFTER starting medical school? This should be more clearly stated and compared to other papers demonstrating the onset of mental health problems after matriculation to medical school.

Table 3: again, "falling within clinical and non-clinical range before and after treatment" is not clear

Figure 1: definitions are needed for "psychiatric review" and "psychology assessment"

Figure 1: add the names of the scales used at time 2. For time 1, "routine measures sent:” the authors should probably name the modality used to send the scales to the students

Figure 1: consider adding a legend describing all acronyms so that the reader can easily understand your entire process at a glanced when adding your comments to the authors.
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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I am able to assess the statistics

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