Reviewer’s report

Title: Debate: Why should gender-affirming health care be included in health science curricula?

Version: 1 Date: 03 Sep 2019

Reviewer: Timo Nieder

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript is intended to be published as a debate. In the key message that transgender health care should be included in health science curricula, I agree with the authors. However, and despite the format of a debate, in my view the manuscript in its current form lacks both (1) clear structure and (2) transparency. I will comment on both aspects below and will add some one minor comment.

(1) The abstract exemplifies the poor structure. Already the second sentence expresses an opinion ("believe"), which I find at least unusual (outside the conclusion). In addition, this statement ("we believe") is unclear: What does "affirmed" concretely mean (as transgender? as a human being?) and why is this important in the context of transgender? Who has "judged" for what reason and to what extent and why should this stop? As the submission guidelines say, the abstract should be structured with a background, main body of the abstract and short conclusion. I find that the abstract does not clearly correspond to this structure. The inadequate structure of the abstract is unfortunately reflected in the inadequate structure of the manuscript.

The first paragraph of the main text ("we...") should be at the end of the introduction ("background"). Then ("we argue") the authors should describe their procedure. The questions below can be helpful in describing the procedure (which in turn provides a structure for the main body).

(2) Neither abstract nor in the text is a method or procedure described that could specify a structure. I am aware that this is a debate (and not a research article), but I would find it necessary to describe the approach taken for drafting the manuscript to allow transparency regarding the procedure. In detail, this includes the following questions to be adressed (among others): Which literature resp. bibliographic database was searched for and where? According to which criteria was the cited literature selected? What considerations led to the selection of the main topics - Mental Health, HIV, Violence and victimisation? How and to what extent do the main topics and the related contents justify the inclusion of transgender health in health sciences curricula (besides the argument that the authors consider it crucial)?

Minor comment: On page 5, liline 36/37, the authors write that "even within the author team of this article" tensions were going on with regard to a certain controversial topic. If a personal note is already used in a scientific text, then the personal position (here obviously opposing positions) should be explained and reasoned. If this does not happen (as here), the statement has no extra value.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

No

**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:

Acceptable

**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