Reviewers report

Title: FORUM THEATER STAGING OF DIFFICULT ENCOUNTERS WITH PATIENTS TO INCREASE EMPATHY IN STUDENTS: DETERMINANTS OF EFFICACY. EVALUATION AT ANGERS UNIVERSITY MEDICAL SCHOOL

Version: 0 Date: 18 Dec 2019

Reviewer: Tony Young

Reviewers report:

This is a timely and well-written report of an evaluation of an intervention involving a particular form of applied drama to medical education. It follows a clear and conventional structure in general, although see below for a specific area for improvement related to the background to FT. It is generally well-written. Its procedures seem robust and appropriately applied. Its conclusions were evidence-related and interesting. Its findings are likely to be of interest to a broad readership involved with psycho-social medical education.

Specific comments and recommendations

[Throughout (page(s), line(s))] 

(2,51) Typo - 'Being an actor…'
4, 17 - 24. A reference and further detail is needed for the assertion about the use of applied drama. By whom, when, in what quasi-clinical settings and with which groups?
4, 22 - 23. Evidence and further detail is needed for the assertion that applied drama allows participants to better understand themselves.
4, 24 - 41. More detail is needed here on Forum Theatre. See comments below re pages 9 - 10, but essentially why was this particular form of applied theatre chosen and what are its specific characteristics? The Middlewick et al (2012) paper referred to is a useful starting point, but the detail here needs to be fleshed out more to give readers a clearer idea. You state later that FT has not been used in medical education before (10, 10 - 14) so need to say more here about you chose it.
5, 7 - 19. Why were fourth-year medical students in particular chosen? With what assumptions? More detail here would be helpful.
5, 36. In what ways was the design compatible with the fourth-year curriculum?
5, 48 - 58. What evidence is there that the homework was done? Would doing it not doing this have a material effect on outcomes?
6, 1 - 7. More detail is needed on the FT sessions, ideally on each scenario. Why these scenarios in particular? What did each consist of? A summary of justifications and procedures would be useful here.
9, 19. Mention the scale again for the 6-point increase?
9 - 10. The whole subsection on Forum Theatre, certainly up to 'To our knowledge…' (p.10) seems to more properly belong in the 'Background' section. This detail about FT is interesting and useful, but perhaps is in the wrong place.
12, 53 - typo - extra space between 'and' and 'gender'.
14, - typo - '…RC conceptualised' - past simple is more appropriate here.

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

**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.

I recommend additional statistical review

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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