Reviewer’s report

Title: Must we remain blind to undergraduate medical ethics education in Africa?:-a cross-sectional study of Nigerian medical students

Version: 0 Date: 20 Feb 2017

Reviewer: David Musick

Reviewer’s report:

This paper reports on a survey of senior medical students at a single medical school in Nigeria, pertaining to the subject of ethics education. The paper is well written and well organized. The research method used, survey research, benefits from a very high response rate of 91%. The subject matter is of great importance to medical education in Nigeria and, by implication and according to the authors, to other medical schools in sub-Saharan Africa. Overall, I think the paper is timely and of publishable quality. I would raise the following concerns and/or recommendations:

1. In regard to the 63-item questionnaire used, it would be useful to know a bit more about how it was constructed and why the authors chose the particular survey items. Were they based on the literature review? Or did the authors choose the items themselves? If so, why? The authors should spend some time in the methods section providing a bit more detail about the construction of the survey.

2. The authors note that the majority of their respondents were male (71.4%). Does this reflect the population of medical students in general at their school? Were females under-represented in the survey respondent group?

3. It would be very interesting to know if female medical students in this study responded differently than male medical students. There is some literature which shows that female physicians view ethics and related issues very differently than their male counterparts. I would suggest the authors could strengthen this paper if they compared the opinions of the respondents based on gender.

4. In several place, the authors state that their findings in this study of a single school may reflect what is the case in the medical curricula of most or all medical schools in sub-Saharan Africa. This strikes me as a bit of a generalized assertion. I'm not sure the statement is supported by the findings of a single study at one school. There are several references that appear to be related to this issue. Perhaps the authors could make the connection more clear by citing some of these references in the text, in support of their assertion.

5. Final sentence of the background section, revise to say "....as well as the ethical/professional dilemmas with which they may be confronted."
6. In many places in the paper, the word "majority" is used. Sometimes it begins a sentence, other times it is found in the middle of a given sentence. "Majority" should almost always be preceded by either "a" or "the." As written, it is an awkward use of this word.

7. Results section, line 93: do the authors mean to say that no students were "capable" of specifying clearly the title of any medical ethics textbook, etc? The word "incapable" is incorrect, if I'm interpreting the data and the sentence correctly.

8. Line 193 in the discussion section, an abbreviation is used (DPR). Does this mean "doctor-patient relationship"? Should be spelled out instead of abbreviated.

9. Line 212 in the discussion section, sentence ends with the word "this." To what does "this" refer? Should not end a sentence in this manner.

10. Table 3 was difficult to read, as it appears that the column widths were too narrow. Make sure these are wide enough to display the data properly.

11. Table 4 is very interesting and valuable. The display of these data would be even stronger if you sorted the data from high to low on column A (Often). Also, be sure to allow adequate space between the numbers and percentages displayed. Two of the results in column A are italicized for no particular reason.

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 am able to assess the statistics

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