Reviewer’s report

Title: An interprofessional cohort analysis of student interest in medical ethics education: A survey-based quantitative study

Version: 0 Date: 27 Oct 2019

Reviewer: Dónal O'Mathúna

Reviewer's report:

Overall, I think this is a good manuscript that should be published. It is very well written and reports a helpful study. However, there are some ways that some aspects are presented which require revision. These should not be extensive revisions, but if they cannot be done, they undermine the conclusions that the authors are seeking to make. So, while they are not extensive, they are crucial changes.

This manuscript is presented as an interprofessional survey with implications for interprofessional education. However, the survey was completed by different professionals, but there is no indication that it asked about interprofessional issues. It seems to have just focused on ethics training. Towards the end of the manuscript, this is acknowledged as a limitation (p. 11, line 255), but a survey completed by different professionals does not make it an interprofessional study. Therefore, this should not be presented as such.

Methods

Study Sample

It would have helped to explain what clerkship and the BS/(D)MD programs mean at this point in the article, and explain what sorts of nursing programs the participants were involved in. Some of this was included in the Discussion (p. 10), but up until that point I had no idea what sorts of students were in these programs.

Survey

Was any attempt made to validate the survey? If not, why not? Are there not validated instruments that could have been used?

Throughout the methods, results and discussion sections, there was fluid movement between the terms "medical ethics", "bioethics," "healthcare ethics" and "ethics." While these are similar, there is debate and discussion over whether or not these are the same. This is especially apparent over medical ethics and nursing ethics, with even textbooks claiming these are different (e.g. Butts & Rich, Nursing Ethics, pp. 59-61). There are also debates over whether "bioethics" is the same as "healthcare ethics," especially regarding its clinical component. This has significant
implications for the survey used here. If the survey asked whether or not someone had taken formal "medical ethics" coursework, a nurse who had a course in "nursing ethics" might answer No - especially if that course presented the view that medical and nursing ethics are very different. On the other hand, if the survey asked about "ethics coursework" (as some of the discussion suggests), then the authors should have described it as such - not "medical ethics" coursework. This lack of clarity is especially obvious on p. 8 where the heading lists "medical ethics curriculum" but the paragraph describes it as "graduate level ethics training." A nurse might perceive "medical ethics" as much less relevant than "ethics" or even "healthcare ethics." My point here is not to take a position on whether nursing ethics and medical ethics are fundamentally different, but to point out that the authors slip back and forth between terms in an inappropriate way, and if this approach was taken in the original survey, then it undermines its validity and usefulness.

The manuscript is written well, and flows well. There were only 2 typos that I noted:

(p. 9, line 203) - "data" is plural, so the verb should be also.

(p. 11, line 249) - "an" is singular and "groups" is plural. Pick one.

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

Unable to assess

**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

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable
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