Reviewer's report

Title: Enhancing utility and understanding of evidence based practice through undergraduate nurse education

Version: 0 Date: 23 Jun 2017

Reviewer: Konstantinos Antypas

Reviewer's report:

The paper is presenting the results of a study that evaluated the beliefs about Evidence Based Practice (EBP) and measured the implementation of EBP of first year nursing students at the start and at the end of their first year. The results are showing a significant improvement in both scales, and according to the authors this is because an EBP educational module was introduced to the educational program. The study did not include any control group and therefore it is not possible to distinguish between the effect of the EBP module or of the first year of nursing studies. This of course is understandable since it is difficult and ethically challenging to not offer EBP training to a group of future nurses for the sake of research. Nevertheless, it is importance that the authors acknowledge this limitation, explicitly under Limitations, by re-evaluating the second objective, and by giving a new direction to the Discussion.

Further comments:

- Why was the Mann Whitney test chosen for the test and are the assumptions fulfilled? The Mann Whitney test is a non-parametric test and not parametric as mentioned in the paper.

- How much clinical practice did the students have before Time 1 and between Time 1 and Time 2?

- As mentioned above, the whole Discussion should be revised to reflect the objective findings of the study.

- In Discussion, the authors compare the results of this study with the study described in a paper by Leach et al (2015). An important difference between the two studies is that Leach et al (2015) seemed to have used the same sample of students for pre-post comparisons and adopted a conservative approach in treating the missing data (last-observation-carried-forward technique). The comparison between the two studies is still relevant, but should be done in the light of the different methodological approaches.
- The second paragraph in discussion refers to the improvement in the implementation of EBP. It seems that the implementation is anyway expected to be improved from Time 1 to Time 2, just because there might be limited or no practice before Time 1.

- Limitations should also be revised, to include all the limitations of the study.

- In Table 2, Time 2 percentages add to 101%.

- Check the guidelines regarding table format. I have the impression that shading is not allowed.

**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.

No

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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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