Author's response to reviews

Title: Current Knowledge of Scoliosis in Physiotherapy Students Trained in the United Kingdom

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Author's response to reviews:

Thank you very much for your very constructive feedback. I have made all required amendments you discussed in your review - and have answered each point below under 'A: ' for author comment. Many thanks, DAJB

Reviewer #1

Introduction:

1. 'The aim of this study is not to investigate IS, but to evaluate physiotherapy students basic knowledge of IS. Some sections of the introduction (definition, aethiology, diagnosis and treatment) are not relevant to the study. The introduction is too wide and should summarize recent research related to the topic. '

A: major rewrite of introduction

2. 'It is not necessary to quote in the introduction the contents of the text books used in physiotherapy degree courses. It is sufficient to include the statement pag 6 lines 53-57.'

A: required amendment made

3. 'Lines 5-17 pag 7 are a repetition of page 5 lines 29-46.'

A: required amendment made
4. 'Page 7 line 17: to introduct the gap in literature, it is useful to start with "However, no study verified..." before stating the aim of the study ("Therefore, this study… - line 17).'

A: requested amendment made.

Method:

1. 'The population completing the questionnaire may not be representative of the entire population of the penultimate and final year UK physiotherapy student, since it is not possible to know the size of the population the questionnaire was distributed, the percentage and the provenance of the students filling it.

The students who filled the questionnaire may attend only some of the Universities who participated to the study. So, no definitive conclusion can be drawn from the study. It is a limitation of the study and it should be stated in the discussion.'

A: This has been addressed through amendment of Discussion to highlight the above limitation.

Results:

1. Authors should insert a table showing the percentage of answers for each option of every item. In the study, they just listed some of the percentages of some options of every item.

A: Graph inserted for each percentage of answers for each item

2. The authors chose to eliminate from the analysis the answer ‘I don't know”, and considering as "wrong” only the wrong answers. However, the answer "I don't know" shows the ignorance on the topic of the students, students who did not know the answer are at the same level of students who gave wrong answers.

A: This comment was taken into consideration with introduction of recognition of the ignorance of the students to the topic displayed by ‘I don’t know’ and the statistics included in our analysis or results and discussion. For comparison with previous studies it was required to keep 'I Don't Know' option as previously noted in Research by Drake et al.

3. Pag 12. The items 8, 9, and 10 are not open questions, as stated by the authors: some answers were proposed.

A: Removal of statement ‘open’ questions
4. Item 8: none of the proposed answers was correct according to recent literature. No physical activity can be considered beneficial for patients with IS. This item is incorrect. It has been correct using an existing questionnaire already used in former studies, to be able to make comparisons. But in discussion it is important to state there was this flaw.

A: Statement made within discussion to highlight lack of research in this field

5. Questionnaire attached: if you add the table with the items, it is not necessary. If you attach it, it should be exactly the same that was proposed to the students, without references.

A: Attached questionnaire in exact format as proposed to student without references

Other corrections:

pag 8 line 27: all data were accumulated

A: Correction made

pag. 8 line 47: replace ; with :

A: correction made

Reviewer #2

Introduction

1. the introduction appears to me too long, please try to summarize the current literature on the topic, make it clear that you are filling a gap in the literature and state your research question: one page is enough for the introduction.

A: Major rewrite of introduction completed

2. Most parts of your introduction pertains to the discussion section.

Pay attention to add a reference to each statement.

A: major rewrite of introduction completed

Methods:
1. The methods are very detailed and well written.

Results:

In the results section I suggest to focus more to the results, the list of the questions is hard to read, you can use graphs to give to the readers the details for each single questions, but in text I suggest to be more concise.

A: Correction made through addition of graphs for each item