OPEN PEER REVIEW

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As a new feature for progressing towards transparency, we decided to open a new window for all of our editors as well as authors titled "**Open Peer Review**". We hope by this new facility, our reviewers will be more motivated and authors will be more satisfied with the review process. We believe that publishing our peer review reports could make a transparent and clear environment for all our efforts within a journal, but not all reviewers tend to publish their comments.

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- Prevents reviewers from following their individual agendas and leading to the detection of reviewers' conflicts of interests

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Peer Review Report for "Frequency of Non-Medical Use of Methylphenidate (Ritalin) Among Medical Students of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences"

Author(s): Maryam Lashkaripour, Susan Dartomi, Zahra Ghiasi, Farzaneh Farajian-Mashhadi, Narjes Sargolzaei

Review Timeline:

Submit Date: 28 Sep 2018
Revised Date: 30 May 2019
Accepted Date: 1 Jun 2019

Revision (0)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (0) 26 Oct 2018

Dear AE,
There are some comments which should be addressed by the author:
1. The abstract is too long, they have to drop less important sentences such as the name of statistical tests
2. Some of the paragraphs mainly in the introduction and discussion are irrelevant and they have to shorten the whole paper by dropping or merging concepts.
3. I am not convinced that the level of usage is too high by reviewing the method. I suggest writing a much more technical and methodological explanation in the method such as data collection form and data collection scheme, the nonresponse rate, and so on.
4. There is some confusion in the results, such as the frequency of reasons for the drug use; the sum of percentages is much less than 100 %
Finally, I suggest adding a comparable table of the reported percentages in different studies.
Thanks

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (0) 27 Oct 2018

Dear AE,
This article would benefit from close editing. I found it difficult to follow the authors' argument due to the many stylistic and grammatical errors.
TITLE & ABSTRACT
- Aren't "medical assistants" a part of "medical students"? The title needs to be revised.
METHODS
- Give the eligibility criteria for participants?
- If it is a descriptive study, why have you used statistical tests? What is your mean by "descriptive study"? (with reference)
- Clearly define all outcomes, exposures, predictors, potential confounders, and effect modifiers. (As the authors have analyzed related factors.)
- Explain how missing data and outliers were addressed? (if there were such unusual observations.)
- The methods of analysis of data used to explore the issue are inappropriate and insufficient.
FINDINGS
- What is the difference between frequency and prevalence? Both have used in the manuscript.
- Write down the numbers in the tables in English format.
- Some information has repeated in both tables and text. Avoid repetitions in the whole document.
- State the name of each used statistical test.
- Where the assumptions of the statistical tests in Tables 2 & 3 assessed? Explain and provide a reference.
- Report P-values in a correct manner as $P<0.001$ not $P=0.000$.
- Give reasons for non-participation in the study?
- There is no 95% CI in section "RESULTS"! (it was mentioned in section "METHODS").
- Since the sample size had not been computed for running statistical tests in the current research, please perform power analysis for each statistical test, explain and report them separately.
- In the "INTRODUCTION" section, the authors have mentioned that: "as well factors related … comprehensive study"… How have you determined the related factors? Is it statistically possible to determine the related factors by univariate analyses?... Hint: When comparing different groups, the confounders should be considered by matching, stratification, or statistical methods. But none of these considerations have addressed in the present manuscript. Thus, how do you talk about related factors?
DISCUSSION
- Discuss limitations of the study (if applicable).
OTHER INFORMATION
- State sources of funding and other support and role of funders?
GOOD LUCK

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (0) 1 Nov 2018

Dear AE,

Thanks, For the good work of the authors of the article,
According to numerous studies on the prevalence of Ritalin consumption among medical students, and different educational levels,(for example, Prevalence of nonmedical use of prescription-type opioids, methylphenidate, and sedative-hypnotics among university students in the south of Iran: a regression analysis) the study of the frequency of Ritalin in medical students in Zahedan is not suitable for publication in this journal The results of the study, does not help to solve the country's problems. Also, there is no new information for readers of the article unless the authors add new data. or it is possible to publish the data as letter or brief.
Thanks.

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (0) 1 Nov 2018

Dear EIC,
The author should add:
- Limitation and suggestion in the end of the discussion.
- Ethical consideration in method.
Thanks.

REFEREE: EIC | **Revision** (0) 5 Nov 2018

Dear Author,
The reviewers' comments are mentioned. Please correct the details as mentioned above carefully according to reviewers' request.
Thanks.

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (1)

Reply to Reviewers

Ideally, the reviewing process can significantly improve the submitted manuscripts by allowing the authors to take into account the advice of reviewers. Author(s) must reply to all reviewers' comments in a separate Word file, point by point. A "**Reply to Reviewers**" document is submitted along with revised manuscript during submission of revised files, summarizing the changes that the authors made in response to the reviewers' comments. The responses to reviewers' comments specifies how the authors addressed each comment the reviewers made.

You can read the authors' responses to the reviewers' comments in the next page.

Reviewer 1: manuscript was revised based on your suggestions. Thanks for valuable comments.
1. the abstract is too long, they have to drop less important sentences such as the name of statistical tests
2. Some of the paragraphs mainly in the introduction and discussion are irrelevant and they have to shorten the whole paper by dropping or merging concepts.
3. I am not convinced that the level of usage is too high by reviewing the method. I suggest writing much more technical and methodological explanation in the method such as data collection form and data collection scheme, the nonresponse rate and so on.
4. there is some confusion in the results, such as the frequency of reasons for the drug use; the sum of percentages is much less than 100 %
Finally, I suggest adding a comparable table of the reported percentages in different studies.

Reviewer 2:
This article would benefit from a close editing. I found it difficult to follow the authors' argument due to the many stylistic and grammatical errors. the Article was modified.
TITLE & ABSTRACT
- Aren't "medical assistants" a part of "medical students"? Title needs to be revised. Title revised.
METHODS
- Give the eligibility criteria for participants ?the criteria is mentioned.
- If it is a descriptive study, why have you used statistical tests? What is your mean by "descriptive study"? (with reference). The study is descriptive-analytic.
- Clearly define all outcomes, exposures, predictors, potential confounders, and effect modifiers. (As the authors have analyzed related factors.)
- Explain how missing data and outliers were addressed? (if there were such unusual observations.). there was no unusual observation.
- The methods of analysis of data used to explore the issue are inappropriate and insufficient.
FINDINGS
- What is the difference between frequency and prevalence? Both have used in the manuscript. frequency is true .prevalence was deleted.
- Write down the numbers in the tables in English format.ok.
- Some information has repeated in both tables and text. Avoid repetitions in whole document. Ok.
- State the name of each used statistical test.
- Were the assumptions of the statistical tests in Table 2 & 3 assessed? Explain and provide a reference.
- Report P-values in a correct manner as P<0.001 not P=0.000.

- Give reasons for non-participation to the study?
- There is no 95% CI in section "RESULTS"! (it was mentioned in section "METHODS")..
- Since the sample size had not been computed for running statistical tests in the current research, please perform power analysis for each statistical test, explain and report them separately. We computed sample size based on the previous study in this topic. It was mentioned in method part.
- In "INTRODUCTION" section, the authors have mentioned that: "as well factors related … comprehensive study"… How have you determined the related factors? Is it statistically possible to determine the related factors by univariate analyses?... Hint: When comparing different groups, the confounders should be considered by matching, stratification, or

statistical methods. But none of these considerations have addressed in the present manuscript. Thus, how do you talk about related factors? your point is true. Article revised.

DISCUSSION
- Discuss limitations of the study (if applicable).added.
OTHER INFORMATION
- State sources of funding and other support and role of funders?
GOOD LUCK

Reviewer 3:
Thanks, For the good work of the authors of the article,
According to numerous studies on the prevalence of Ritalin consumption among medical students, and different educational levels,(for example, Prevalence of nonmedical use of prescription-type opioids, methylphenidate, and sedative-hypnotics among university students in the south of Iran: a regression analysis) the study of the frequency of Ritalin in medical students in Zahedan is not suitable for publication in this journal The results of the study, does not help to solve the country's problems. Also, there is no new information for readers of the article unless the authors add new data. or it is possible to publish the data as letter or brief.

Associate Editor's Comments:

Associate Editor 1:
add:
limitation and suggestion in end of discussion: these parts is added.

ethical consideration in method. This point is added.

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (1)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (1) 26 Apr 2019

Dear AE,
The topic is attractive, however, there are the following considerations:
1. Introduction is too long
2. They have to highlight the novelty of this study; what is the expected new information in this study
3. In the method, they do not need to add the sample size formula, while they did not explain the data collection scheme clearly. Since they asked about a sensitive issue, they have to write how they maximized the accuracy of responses
4. The design of tables is not compatible with English paper. Also, they have to edit the whole paper mainly the results, it is confusing sometimes.
5. There is a gap between the results and discussion; some paragraphs are less relevant to their findings.
Thanks.

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (1) 27 Apr 2019

Dear EIC,
The manuscript is studied, and there are some comments which should be addressed by the author. According to the comments, the document needs major revision.
Kind regards,

REFEREE: EIC | **Revision** (1) 27 Apr 2019

Dear Author,
The reviewers' comments are mentioned. Please correct the details as mentioned above carefully according to reviewers' request.
Thanks.

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (2)

Reply to Reviewers

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You can read the authors' responses to the reviewers' comments in the next page.

The topic is attractive, however, there are the following considerations:
1. introduction is too long. *The information that mentioned in this part are necessary for explaining the subject and discussion part.* However, this section is shortened as much as possible.
2. they have to highlight the novelty of this study; what is the expected new information in this study.

This study examines the frequency of nonmedical use of prescription Methylphenidate (Ritalin) among Medical Students of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences. Previous studies have been conducted on the same subject but not include all of these topics in one group in other hand those studies have been conducted in other regions of the country, but given that the use of this drug can initiate the use of other stimulant drugs, and in this region, access to other stimulant drugs is higher than the other regions of the country, And the higher risk of dependence, examining nonmedical use of prescription methylphenidate in this area is very important. By knowing the precise frequency, we can planning more precisely and so we can more eficient prevent the dependence of stimulant medications.

This part is added to article.

3. in the method, they do not need to add the sample size formula, while they did not explain the data collection scheme clearly. Since they asked about a sensitive issue, they have to write how they maximized the accuracy of responses. The formula was deleted. *data collection scheme is clearly explained*.

4. the design of tables are not compatible with an English paper. Also, they have to edit the whole paper mainly the results, it is confusing sometimes.ok. tables are revised.
5. there is a gap between the results and discussion; some paragraphs are less relevant to their findings.

Changes are highlighted in the article.

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (2)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: EIC | **Revision** (2) 1 Jun 2019

Dear Author,
The document is reviewed carefully by the reviewers. According to their comments and your revisions as requested, this manuscript is accepted.
Thanks.