OPEN PEER REVIEW

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What is "Open Peer Review" process?

An "Open Peer Review" process is making the details of all review process (including reviewers, associate editors, and EICs comments) as "Public" as it is agreed by EIC, Authors, and reviewers.

Advantages of "Open Peer Review" process

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You can find out more at:
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Peer Review Report for "Medical Students' Clinical Skills Compared to Educational Standards at Universities of Medical Sciences: A Self-assessment Study"

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Review Timeline:

Submit Date:	9 May 2022
Revised Date:	29 Jun 2022
Accepted Date:	13 Jul 2022

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) — 20 May 2022

Dear AE,
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.

-What is the meaning of mean and standard deviation in tables? Have the answers to the questions been either yes or no?
-Why hasn't there been a comparative analysis between different student groups, such as final-year students and first-year students?
-What is the purpose of reporting the results obtained from all students together?

Kind regards

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (0) — 14 Jun 2022

Dear AE,
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.

1. The methodology needs to be edited. Please explain when and where the data was collected, the study tool used, and the statistical software employed.
2. In the conclusion, please provide practical suggestions based on the findings.
3. Please verify your keywords using the Mesh database.

• Background:
1. Indicate the importance of the study by referencing previous studies in the field.

• Methodology:
1. Sample size: How many students were included and excluded in total, based on the criteria?
2. Study tool: The checklist requires additional descriptions. It is unclear how the authors assessed the validity (CVI and CVR) and reliability of the questionnaire in this study. What were the minimum and maximum scores for each structure? Discuss the range, high and low values of the skill.
3. In which database was the questionnaire designed and made available online?
4. How did you inform and provide access to the online questionnaire for the students?
5. Mention the statistical methods used and the statistical software employed.
6. What measures were taken to control confounding variables in this study? For example, consider academic achievement or grades earned in each section.
7. Mention the code and date of ethical approval in the text.

• Results:
1. Report the demographic information of the participants.
2. Correct the tables. First, report the frequencies and then the percentages.
3. Based on what criteria did you report the highest and lowest scores in each section? It is suggested to calculate and report all scores on a scale of one hundred and then make comparisons.
4. It is suggested to display a table examining the interaction between Clinical Skill and Average Grade Points obtained by students in each section using regression tests.

• Discussion:
1. Please mention the strengths and weaknesses of your study.
2. Are there any limitations to this study? If yes, please mention all limitations of the current study.

Kind regards

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (0) 15 Jun 2022

Dear EIC
The reviewer(s) have recommended publication, but also suggest some minor revisions to

the manuscript. Therefore, I invite the author to respond to the reviewer(s)' comments and revise his manuscript.

• Methodology:

1. Please explain when and where the data was collected, the study tool used, and the statistical software employed.
2. In the conclusion, please provide your practical suggestions.
3. Please check your keywords using the Mesh database.

• Background:

1. Indicate the importance of the study by mentioning previous studies in this field.

• Methodology:

1. Sample size: How many students were included and excluded in total based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria?
2. Study tool: The checklist requires additional descriptions. It is not clear how the authors assessed the validity (CVI and CVR) and reliability of the questionnaire in this study. What were the minimum and maximum scores in each structure? You must discuss the range, high and low values of the skill.
3. In which database was the questionnaire designed and made available online?
4. How did you inform and access the students' online questionnaire?
5. Mention the statistical methods and statistical software used.
6. What steps did you take to control confounding variables in this study, such as academic achievement or grades earned in each section?
7. The code and date of ethical approval should be mentioned in the text.

• Results:

1. Report the demographic information of the participants.
2. Correct the tables. First, report the frequencies, and then the percentages.
3. On what basis did you report the highest and lowest scores in each section? It is suggested that all scores be calculated and reported on a hundred-point basis, and the comparison can be made later.
4. It is suggested to display a table examining the interaction of Clinical Skill and Average Grade Points obtained by students in each section using regression tests.

• Discussion:

1. Please mention the weak and strong points of your study.
2. Are there any limitations to this study? If yes, please mention all limitations of the current study.

Regards

REFEREE: EIC | **Revision (0)** 15 Jun 2022

Dear Author,

Your article is reviewed by the reviewers carefully. According to their comments, this document needs minor revision. Please follow their comments as requested.

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.

Dear EIC, the comments of the respected reviewer was observed and modified accordingly as follows:

Reviewer 1:
What is the purpose of including measures such as mean and standard deviation in the tables? Were the answers to the questions only "yes" or "no"?
The purpose of including descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation is to provide readers with an understanding of the participants' status in the study.

Why wasn't there any comparison made between different categories of students, such as final-year students and early-year students?
The objective of the study was to investigate students in two educational levels, internship, and traineeship, and further research could focus on different categories of students. Additionally, first-year students are still in the basic science stage and have not started clinical or hospital-based topics, therefore they have no knowledge about the current situation in clinical departments.

What was the intention behind reporting the results obtained from all the students together?
If the esteemed reviewer is referring to all the students, including internship students and trainees, the reason for selecting them is their exposure to clinical departments and therefore their awareness of the educational situation in these departments.

Reviewer 2:
Dear Author

- *Abstract:*

1. Methodology to be edited. Explain, when and where the data was collected? study tool? Statistical software?
As the respected reviewer commented, the time and place of the study, tool, and statistical software were explained in the Abstract section.
2. In conclusion, write down your practical suggestions.
As the respected reviewer commented, we discussed some practical suggestions in the conclusion section.
3. Please check your Keywords with Mesh data base.
As the respected reviewer commented, the keywords were checked and modified.

- *Background:*

1. Indicated the importance of the study by mention the previous study in these field.

Some studies have already been mentioned.

• *Methodology*

1. Sample size: How many were the total number of students based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria?

This study included all the medical students as the stagers and interns. It was a survey-type study.

2. study tool: The checklist needs additional descriptions. It is not clear how the authors have assessed the validity (CVI and CVR) and reliability of the questionnaire in this study. What was the minimum and maximum score in each structure? you must discuss about range, high and low value of skill.

The clinical skills checklist was based on the competency document of general medicine doctoral graduates approved by the sixty-second session of the High Council for Medical Science Planning on 1394/10/20, an instruction issued by the Ministry of Health to be implemented in all universities of medical sciences in the country. Therefore, its validity and reliability have already been calculated and applied by experts in the relevant ministry. In addition, this questionnaire has been used in other studies as a standard questionnaire. For example, refer to the study, Yaghini O, Yamani N, Daryazadeh S, Barzegar M, Sadeghi A. Medical Students' Clerkship Exposures to Expected Clinical Skills and Comparison with the Specified Minimums Iranian Journal of Medical Education. 2018;18(81):392-402.

3. In which database is the questionnaire designed and online?

The link address of the questionnaire was https://survey.porsline.ir/s/VFzphxj. It was designed in the Porsline.ir platform.

4. How did you inform and access the students' online questionnaire?

The participants were informed by sharing the questionnaire link in their WhatsApp Groups.

5. Mention statistical methods and statistical software.

Since the current situation was described in this study through descriptive statistics, the main statistical reports included frequency, standard deviation, and mean, which were reported separately in the tables.

6. What did you do to control the confounding variables in this study? Such as: Academic achievement or grades earned in each section.

They were not controlled and can be considered as one of the limitations.

7. The Code and date of ethical approval should be mentioned in text.

As the dear reviewer commented, the code and date of ethical approval were mentioned in the text.

• *Result:*

1. Report the status of participants' demographic information.

This study was performed on 107 medical students (53 stagers and 54 interns). Other demographic features were not the aim to be investigated.

2. Be corrected Tables. The frequency report first and then percentages.

As dear reviewer commented, they have been reported accordingly.

3. On what basis did you report the highest and lowest scores in each section? It is suggested that all scores be finally calculated and reported on a hundred basis and that this comparison be made later.

They were reported according to the observed frequencies and percentages.

4. It is suggested to display a table examining the interaction of Clinical Skill and Average grade points obtained by students in each section with regression tests.

Yes, it can be the analyses for further investigations.

Discussion:

1. Please mention the weak and strong points of your study.

Yes, in the following paragraph, we have mentioned to some weakpoints and suggested hoe to improve it.

"Due to the stager or pre-internship exams, students are more inclined to devote their time to study and therefore do not take the necessary opportunity to practice clinical skills. In addition, holding practical exams in the internship course is so that the practical skills of the students are not mostly evaluated and can cause the students not to emphasize and focus on these skills. Therefore, it is suggested that more portion of practical exam scores in intern and stager levels be allocated to students' ability in clinical skills. On the other hand, it seems that the presence of a large number of students in educational rounds reduces its quality. Therefore, it is better to admit the number of medical students based on the existing capacities of universities so that it does not affect the quality of clinical education."

2. Are there any limitations for this study? If yes, please mention all limitations of current study.

Yes, in the following paragraph, we have mentioned to the limitations.

"This study also faced some limitations, such as filling out checklists; some students could not enter exact numbers against some typical clinical skill levels such as gastric tube insertion

observation or other skills. In this study, only two entries of medical students were examined, and due to the specific conditions of each entry, the results may be different from the entries of other medical students. Therefore, it is better to do similar studies on other entrances and medical schools."

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) — 7 Jul 2022

Dear AE,
The study is reviewed carefully. According to comments and revisions by the author, this manuscript is accepted.
Thanks

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (1) — 11 Jul 2022

Dear AE,
I suggest some major revisions to the manuscript. Therefore, I invite the author to respond to the comments and revise his manuscript.

Why hasn't any comparison been made between internship students and trainees?
Each questionnaire has specific instructions. For example, if a question has four options, each option is assigned a score from one to four, and the sum of these numbers should be calculated overall. Alternatively, is it sufficient to report the percentage of responses to each question?
If it is done in this way, reporting the mean and standard deviation is not suitable for this purpose at all.
Please provide an explanation regarding the assessment of the final score of the questionnaire. Your statistics are purely descriptive.

Kind regards,

Alireza Bakhshipour: Associate Editor | **Revision** (1) — 13 Jul 2022

Dear EIC
Based on the authors' answers to the reviewers' comments, the reviewer(s) have recommended publication.
Kind regards

Alireza Bakhshipour: EIC | **Revision** (1) — 13 Jul 2022

Dear Author,
The document is reviewed carefully by the reviewers. According to their comments and your

revisions as requested, this manuscript is accepted.

Thanks.