

Peer Review

Review of: "Medical Education Gone Viral During the COVID-19 Pandemic"

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Potentially an interesting paper, but unfortunately presented as one of the worst attempts at reporting qualitative research I have read in a long time.

Abstract

Don't use abbreviations in the Abstract, e.g., DSM-5 and IRB. IRB is a very American concept (and abbreviation); consider Qeios's international readership. I would suggest referring to 'Formal research ethics approval..' instead of 'Formal IRB approval..' in the Abstract.

The following paragraph in the Methods section of the Abstract, 'In general, the trainees who harbored second thoughts about their suitability for the medical profession exhibited more symptoms of mental distress compared to the students and residents who believed they were "meant" to be physicians,' is Results, not Methods!

The sentence in **Conclusions**: 'Our pilot study is in line with larger studies..' is really Discussion material, not a Conclusion to this pilot study.

Main text

Somehow, interviewing 63 medical residents over two years does not justify calling this a pilot study, nor does it justify not seeking proper ethical approval. It is questionable whether the authors truly grasp the concept of qualitative research with sentences such as 'though no formal coding or statistical analysis was conducted...?'

The phrase 'qualitatively reviewed' in the sentence 'Responses were qualitatively reviewed' is odd; I assume the authors used some kind of generic content analysis (as they also mention trends in their data). This paper would have benefited from a proper Methods section, with methodological references

to, for example, pilot studies, research ethical approval, content analysis (or whatever method of analysis has been used), semi-structured interviews,...

The main text has nothing on research ethics. Based on the one sentence in the Abstract, 'Formal IRB approval was not sought due to the pilot, urgency, and the supportive nature of the intervention,' I must say this is unacceptable. There is no urgency in a COVID-19 study that took at least two years (as the authors stated 'Between 2020 and 2022..'); even if there had been an urgency in getting started in 2020, as the authors had no idea how long COVID-19 would last, or whether anybody would survive, ethical approval should have been sought for interviews in 2021 and 2022.

I think the authors mean 'Well-being research..' or perhaps 'Psychological research..' in the sub-heading 'Psychiatric research...'

The Results section of the paper is virtually non-existent, and the Discussion section is mainly on the wider literature without much linkage to the authors' findings.

Style and layout

- In the main body of the text, there are two more abbreviations (apart from those in the Abstract) that are not given in full on first use, PTSD and UC.
- There is an odd full stop in the sentence 'Many programs. Including...'

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.