

Peer Review Report

Review Report on The role of European schools and university departments of public health in the 2020 COVID-19 response

Original Article, Int J Public Health

Reviewer: Franco Cavallo

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EVALUATION

Q 1 Please provide your detailed review report to the authors. The editors prefer to receive your review structured in major and minor comments. Please consider in your review the methods (statistical methods valid and correctly applied (e.g. sample size, choice of test), is the study replicable based on the method description?), results, data interpretation and references. If there are any objective errors, or if the conclusions are not supported, you should detail your concerns.

The authors describe the results of a cross-sectional survey from 59 schools of Public Health belonging to the ASPHER organization, which concerns the activities put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the aim to collaborate in responding to this challenge.

The results of the survey are quite interesting and give a clear response to how these schools tried to offer their active collaboration in contrasting the pandemic.

The paper is simple, well written and gives good information to the public it is aimed for (professionals in Public Health).

Its weaknesses rely on the relatively low response-rate (around 50%) with no information about the geographical distribution of the responding and non-responding schools. This should be added to clarify which countries and type of schools this subgroup is representative of.

In the methods section the authors should better define what 'activity' really means and possibly differentiate at least some categories of 'consistent vs light' activity, in terms of time spent, courses involved and so on. Also some information on how schools responded is desirable, i.e. whether they adapted already existing activities or had to plan everything from scratch.

Table 1 is not very clear. N and % have two superscripts which are not referred to in the table and seem useless. Percentages should be at least in italics to differentiate them from absolute numbers. The numbers under the N column seem to refer to the number of schools having planned such kind of activities, but then the total N of activities is meaningless, as it is a sum of schools, not of activities, whose total is not defined.

Q 2 Please summarize the main findings of the study.

The authors describe the results of a cross-sectional survey from 59 schools of Public Health belonging to the ASPHER organization, which concerns the activities put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the aim to collaborate in responding to this challenge. The authors conclude that the majority of the surveyed schools has actively participated in contrasting the pandemic.

Q 3 Please highlight the limitations and strengths.

The results of the survey are quite interesting and give a clear response to how these schools tried to offer their active collaboration in contrasting the pandemic.

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PLEASE COMMENT

Q 4 Is the title appropriate, concise, attractive?

Yes

Q 5 Are the keywords appropriate?

Yes

Q 6 Is the English language of sufficient quality?

Yes

Q 7 Is the quality of the figures and tables satisfactory?

No.

Q 8 Does the reference list cover the relevant literature adequately and in an unbiased manner?)

Yes

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Q 9 Originality



Q 10 Rigor



Q 11 Significance to the field



Q 12 Interest to a general audience



Q 13 Quality of the writing



Q 14 overall scientific quality of the study



REVISION LEVEL

Q 15 Please take a decision based on your comments:

Minor revisions.