

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

BMJ Paediatrics Open publishes all reviews undertaken for accepted manuscripts. Reviewers are asked to complete a checklist review form and are provided with free text boxes to elaborate on their assessment. These free text comments are reproduced below.

ARTICLE DETAILS

TITLE (PROVISIONAL)	Supporting Marginalized Children with School Problems in the COVID-19 Pandemic
AUTHORS	Minhas, Ripudaman Singh Freeman, Sloane J.

VERSION 1 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	Reviewer name: Dr. Simon Lenton Institution and Country: 29, Maple Grove, Bath. BA2 3AF United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Competing interests: None
REVIEW RETURNED	01-Dec-2020

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>Supporting children with school problems during COVID: revisiting the paediatricians toolkit.</p> <p>This is a well written commentary which raises the important issue of how paediatricians can support children with school problems throughout the COVID pandemic.</p> <p>The American Academy of Paediatrics has developed a number of toolkits relating to common problems and I was expecting reference to a toolkit supporting children with school problems within the references, but it is only in the title that the paediatricians toolkit is mentioned.</p> <p>The article briefly mentions disadvantaged children and this possibly should be given greater emphasis as the combination between school problems, disability or emotional difficulties are strongly correlated with poverty and deprivation and it is these children who will be doubly disadvantaged by school closures. For some children with two working parents or a single working parent, especially with more than one child, maintaining a household income, providing additional childcare and a supervised teaching program for their child with learning difficulties without the support of educational professionals will be a challenge too far.</p> <p>It might also be worth adding that for some children home schooling is considerably less stressful than a school environment particularly those with long-term conditions, social communication disorders and those being bullied at school. However, for some children and young people the home environment will be more stressful and less nurturing than a school environment if there is poverty, substance misuse, domestic violence and parental mental health problems.</p> <p>The article would be strengthened by positive suggestions for paediatricians to including their “toolkit” to address the issues highlighted in this topical paper.</p>
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REVIEWER	Reviewer name: Dr. Jeffrey Goldhagen Institution and Country: University of Florida, Jacksonville, Pediatrics Competing interests: None
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REVIEW RETURNED	13-Dec-2020
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GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>The premise for this paper is that, "...the conventional model of education delivery has undergone rapid transformations." This would indicate that the changes that are occurring are permanent. This is not necessarily true--post COVID. So, would remove the term "transformation." The changes that have been made are primarily a temporary response, not transformations. However, there is much to be learned from these "temporary" responses that can inform the future.</p> <p>Providers do need to respond to the challenges COVID presents, but they do not need to "reinvent their approach."</p> <p>The statement that "healthcare providers must now reinvent their approach to school-based problems.....who will present with these issues at some point in their school years," is simply not true post-COVID.</p> <p>What they/we do need to do is use the Pandemic as a lens to understand the inequities and challenges that pre-dated the Pandemic and respond to these to "transform" and "reinvent" support for children with School Problems in the future.</p> <p>The value of this manuscript is that it identifies a number of "lessons learned" from the impact of COVID that can be used to establish standards in the future for supporting children with school problems. If re-contextualized in this context, the manuscript does have value to be published. The title would need to be changed and the framework for the manuscript re-worked...in the context of "lessons learned."</p> <p>The paragraph related specifically to mask wearing as a result of COVID would not be necessary in a revised manuscript.</p> <p>The statement on the Digital Divide could be strengthened.</p> <p>Inequities existed prior to the Pandemic with respect to the response to children with School Problems. COVID-19 has brought clarity to these and innumerable inequities in our care of children. If the authors use this manuscript to establish standards for the treatment of children with school problems (though this term will need to be better defined at the outset of the paper), resulting from the challenges and response to COVID-19, it will have sufficient value to be published.</p>
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VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

<u>Reviewers' Comments</u>	<u>Authors' Responses</u>
Reviewer 1	
The American Academy of Paediatrics has developed a number of toolkits relating to common problems and I was expecting reference to a toolkit supporting children with	Thank you for this feedback. We have revised the title accordingly.

school problems within the references, but it is only in the title that the paediatricians toolkit is mentioned.	
<p>The article briefly mentions disadvantaged children and this possibly should be given greater emphasis as the combination between school problems, disability or emotional difficulties are strongly correlated with poverty and deprivation and it is these children who will be doubly disadvantaged by school closures.</p> <p>For some children with two working parents or a single working parent, especially with more than one child, maintaining a household income, providing additional childcare and a supervised teaching program for their child with learning difficulties without the support of educational professionals will be a challenge too far.</p>	<p>Thank for this comment. We agree that the impact on children from marginalized populations is disproportionate and should be emphasized. We have revised the framing of this submission to reflect this.</p>
<p>It might also be worth adding that for some children home schooling is considerably less stressful than a school environment particularly those with long-term conditions, social communication disorders and those being bullied at school. However, for some children and young people the home environment will be more stressful and less nurturing than a school environment if there is poverty, substance misuse, domestic violence and parental mental health problems.</p> <p>The article would be strengthened by positive suggestions for paediatricians to including their “toolkit” to address the issues highlighted in this topical paper.</p>	<p>Thank you for this insight - we have updated the manuscript to share this.</p>
Reviewer 2:	
<p>The premise for this paper is that, "...the conventional model of education delivery has undergone rapid transformations." This would indicate that the changes that are occurring are permanent. This is not necessarily true-- post COVID. So, would remove the term "transformation." The changes that have been made are primarily a temporary response, not transformations. However, there is much to be learned from these "temporary" responses that can inform the future.</p> <p>Providers do need to respond to the challenges COVID presents, but they do not need to "reinvent their approach."</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments. We agree that there are many lessons to be learned from the impact of COVID on children's educational access. We have edited the manuscript in response to your comments that the changes in education delivery may be temporary.</p>
<p>The statement that "healthcare providers must now reinvent their approach to school-based problems.....who will</p>	<p>Thank you, as above, we have edited the document accordingly.</p>

present with these issues at some point in their school years," is simply not true post-COVID.	
<p>What they/we do need to do is use the Pandemic as a lens to understand the inequities and challenges that pre-dated the Pandemic and respond to these to "transform" and "reinvent" support for children with School Problems in the future.</p> <p>The value of this manuscript is that it identifies a number of "lessons learned" from the impact of COVID that can be used to establish standards in the future for supporting children with school problems. If re-contextualized in this context, the manuscript does have value to be published. The title would need to be changed and the framework for the manuscript re-worked...in the context of "lessons learned."</p>	Thank you. Yes, we have now reframed the manuscript to focus on the inequities revealed by the pandemic.
The paragraph related specifically to mask wearing as a result of COVID would not be necessary in a revised manuscript.	Thank you. We feel there is some merit in keeping mention of the ubiquitous impact of masks, however, we have emphasized it less.
The statement on the Digital Divide could be strengthened.	Thank you. We have edited the document to strengthen this.
Inequities existed prior to the Pandemic with respect to the response to children with School Problems. COVID-19 has brought clarity to these and innumerable inequities in our care of children. If the authors use this manuscript to establish standards for the treatment of children with school problems (though this term will need to be better defined at the outset of the paper), resulting from the challenges and response to COVID-19, it will have sufficient value to be published.	Thank you for your comments and insights on how the manuscript can be reframed to be of interest/value to your readership. We have edited the manuscript to reflect this.
Editor In Chief	
Title delete "Revisiting The Pediatrician's Toolkit" and add "disadvantaged" before "children"	Thank you. We have edited and have suggested using the word "marginalized" to put emphasis on the system's role in perpetuating inequity.
Focus on inequities as suggested by reviewer 2.	Thank you. This has been reframed in the manuscript.

