Reviewer's report

Title: Medical Student Professionalism Narratives: A Thematic Analysis and Interdisciplinary Comparative Investigation

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Reviewer: VIKRAM JHA

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
The authors address an important area of professionalism-ie hidden curriculum and the influence of role models. The research question, however is a bit unclear. Basically, students have been asked to provide narratives of examples of professional and unprofessional behaviour observed during placements. The authors aim to enhance understanding of the hidden curriculum-I dont think the paper actually does this-it explores student perceptions of professionalism related behaviours in practice, and I think the objectives should acknowledge this.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
The methods are well described. It would be useful to have some description of the coding frame developed from the previous study.

3. Are the data sound?
The data is discussed at 3 levels. The descriptive data is straightforward. The qualitative data would benefit from a more in-depth exploration. After all the paper is attempting to enhance our understanding of a complex area of professionalism. The current qualitative data is a bit simplistic and does not really produce themes that have not been previously addressed in the literature. The differences in perceptions of professionalism could be due to several reasons, not least that the sample was different from the first study. I am also unsure as to why the two settings needed to be compared. Is there any evidence that clinical setting influences professionalism related behaviour? These issues should be discussed in the background and a more thorough rationale provided for the study.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Yes. The data is presented appropriately.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
The discussion is reasonably written. It could be improved if the authors linked their findings with the original objective-enhancing our understanding of the hidden curriculum. As it stands, the paper tells us that there are positive and negative role models out there in practice. This does not add a lot to our
understanding in this area. The findings may be limited by the fact that they rely on student perceptions of professionalism. Given that many more experienced clinicians find it difficult to classify professional and unprofessional behaviour, this presents a limitation to the validity of the findings-something that the authors should acknowledge.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
This could be expanded as above

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
The paper should address the difficulties associated with this type of research and suggest how this paper contributes to the literature.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Yes

9. Is the writing acceptable? There are a few typos, particularly in the quotes provided. Otherwise clearly written paper

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests