Reviewer’s report

Title: Becoming a general practitioner? - Which factors have main impact on career choice of medical students

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Reviewer: Lorelei Jones

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Becoming a general practitioner? – Which factors have main impact on career choice of medical students.

Thank you for inviting me to review the above paper. I recommend publication subject to the following minor essential revisions:

Introduction:
In the introduction the authors state that:
‘it is already known, that the demographic development and the increase of chronic diseases lead to the requirement of more physicians’.

It would be more accurate to phrase this in terms of a ‘concern’ or an ‘argument’ and to provide references.

Findings:
The most interesting finding is that only 7% of medical students are interested in a career in general practice, while it appears that GPs make up approximately 50% of the medical workforce. I recommend that more emphasis is given to this finding (and the implications) in the abstract/discussion/conclusion.

P6. The finding that 67% of the students favouring general practice are female is difficult to interpret. Given that 60% of the sample (and the population) are female it is unclear if this finding is significant. It appears a much lower proportion than would be expected and much lower than Obstetrics and Gynaecology (94%) and Paediatrics (81%). Does this mean that general practice in Germany is equally attractive to men and women? Again an interesting finding that I would like to see addressed in the discussion.

Please provide absolute numbers as well as proportions when presenting findings (e.g. 6.8% (88/1299) favoured general practice).

Discussion:
Authors are commended for addressing the limitations of their study in the discussion. In addition to making it difficult to calculate a response rate (which they mention) the survey is also subject to volunteer bias. While this in itself does not to my mind rule out publication, I recommend the authors acknowledge this limitation and the implications for the interpretation of their findings.

P 8. The authors claim to use a ‘validated’ questionnaire. The authors describe
the development and piloting of their questionnaire although I’m not sure this constitutes ‘validation’. I recommend the authors expand on what measures were taken to strengthen the validity of their study, for example, by noting any consistencies/inconsistencies with similar surveys. It is helpful that the authors have included their survey instrument.

Tables:
Table 1: I recommend the headings ‘Sample’ and ‘Population’
Table 5. Guidance is required on how to interpret this information.

Discretionary revisions:
P3. ‘The number of those who complete residency has been decreasing since 1995 and has reached the lowest number in 2009’. It would be helpful if the authors could provide actual figures.
Round up/down all decimals to nearest whole number.
The authors may which to consider the issue of how medical students are recruited. If they are students who have excelled in science subjects at school then this may influence the small number attracted to general practice.
It also appears that some doctors will change to general practice when they are older. The authors may wish to consider how easy it is for doctors to do this.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

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