Reviewer's report

Title: Knowledge assessment of trainees and trainers in General Practice in a neighboring country. A case for international collaboration.

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Reviewer: HARRY AHMED

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This study reports on the feasibility of using a Dutch general practice knowledge test to assess Flemish general practice trainees. It argues the case for a more integrated and collaborative approach to general practice trainee assessment between neighbouring countries and states that this would lead to better quality assessment that is more cost effective.

Major Compulsory Revisions

This paper reports an interesting and original study that is certainly worthwhile for those involved in GP education. However, there are a number of issues;

1. This paper was difficult to read. The English was unclear at times and there are a number of errors throughout the paper. For example;
   Abstract; Methods; Line 3
   ‘Trainees performed the test and trainers in general practice’
   This line should probably read:
   ‘The test was taken by general practice trainees and trainers’

   Background; Paragraph 6; Line 4
   ‘This report describes a first exploratory study to investigate.’
   This line should read:
   ‘This report describes the first exploratory study...’

   Conclusion; line 1
   ‘This study shows the feasibility of using the Dutch knowledge multiple-choice test is feasible in a neighboring country.’
   This line should probably read:
   ‘This study shows that it is feasible to use a Dutch multiple choice knowledge test in a neighbouring country’

There are many more examples throughout the paper. I would suggest the Authors review and proof read the whole paper again and try and make the language clearer and easier to understand.

2. Background
   The background would benefit from being clearer. It would be useful to provide
the reader with more detail regarding existing evidence e.g., are there any reports on collaborative assessment in any other specialties in Europe? Is there any existing evidence that collaboration improves quality or efficiency? The authors state in Paragraph 3 of the background that there is some evidence that collaboration is feasible in an international setting but the reference is for a study that reports on the difference in assessment results according to course and curriculum design so I don’t quite follow this.

3. Results

It would help the reader to interpret the findings of the study if some information was provided on the demographics of the responders from the Belgian universities, and if these were compared with the demographics of the Dutch cohort that was used as the reference group.

4. Discussion

Further discussion regarding the strengths and limitations of this study would be beneficial. For example; the examination outcome was more important to the Dutch students then the Belgian students - what effect has that had on the results? Students from one Belgian university were advised to prepare for the exam – what effect has this had?

Other areas for discussion that would be useful are;

- The educational benefits of collaborative assessment
- The cost of the initial collaboration (question development, ensuring cross-cultural relevance, etc)
- The pro's and con's of internationally integrated general practice education, particularly among countries with differing primary health care systems.

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

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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.