Reviewer's report

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

Version: 2 Date: 27 June 2012

Reviewer: Sandra Zwolsman

Reviewer's report:

Dear authors,

Your article regarding the feasibility of a Dutch knowledge test in Belgium is very interesting and relevant. The article should eventually be published. The topic, introduction, research question and outcomes are interesting and important in the international unification of assessment. However, I do think that the article needs some revisions. The main reason is that I think the statistical paragraph as well as the discussion could use more depth and a more scientific foundation.

I wish you all the best in adapting – and eventually publishing - the article.

Is question posed well defined?

Minor revisions:

The author does explain the background and context well. However, I think the introduction can use a bit more structure with following attention: What is the message of each paragraph and how do they add up to the research question? Perhaps the second and third paragraph about assessing knowledge – though they pose necessary information for the introduction and should therefore not be removed - can be combined/ shortened and more information about this can be placed in the discussion of the article.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?

Minor revisions:

The methods are appropriate and well described. There are a few questions that came to mind when reading the methods section:

- Local validation I do want to know more about the senior trainers that analyzed for face validity. Are they GPs? Do they work for the University of Antwerp?

- Local validation Is it possible to give more information about the questions that have been removed from the test? What does removing the questions mean for the test as a whole?

- Participants Is this study a collaboration with another University? How did you get the data from the Dutch GPs? From what University are the data from Dutch GP trainees and GPs?

Major revision:
Statistics I think more detailed information could be given in the statistics section about what descriptives and what tests were to be used. For example, we described continuous data with means plus standard deviation, or another example we did an ANOVA with universities as grouping variable.

Are data sound?
Minor revision:
Are students of year 7,8 and 9 postgraduate students of year 1, 2 and 3?
Major revision:
I think more detailed information could be given in the statistics section: Were data normally distributed? What consequences does that have for the choice of the tests of comparison/correlation?

Adherence for reporting and data deposition?
Yes, the article is build up according to the IMRAD structure. However, I think the results section should only contain results and no discussion.

Are the limitations clearly stated?
Yes. The limitations are stated throughout the discussion.

Do the authors clearly acknowledge work upon which they are building?
As far as my knowledge goes, I think so.
Major revision
I do think that the discussion needs a more solid foundation with references to comparable or related studies in the field of knowledge assessment.

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

Is the writing acceptable?
I think the article improves after a language check from a professional interpreter.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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

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