Reviewer's report

Title: Family doctors' involvement with families in Estonia

Version: 2 Date: 10 August 2004

Reviewer: Anja Marjatta Taanila

Reviewer's report:

General
The paper deals with the very important matter concerning how the family doctor pays his or her attention to the whole family of the patient. The holistic approach to the patient’s problems is important because as the authors write, “the family has a powerful influence on health and illness and family interventions have been shown to improve health outcomes for a variety of health problems”.

The paper gives information on the attitudes and practice of the family doctors and this information can be utilized in developing doctors’ education and in their practical work.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1. The background chapter could be more thorough. The authors write that training in family practice was started in 1991 and then a new specialty was introduced. The authors could describe briefly how the family doctors are trained at the basic level and how those who had finished their education earlier (mean age of the respondents was 46 years and an average working period was 18 years) had had their family doctor education.
2. In the second paragraph on page 3, the authors mention the self-assessment scale of Doherty and Baird and in the next sentence they describe the situation in Estonia, which sentence also needs, in addition to Lember, Doherty and Baird as a reference.
3. In the method chapter the authors could explain what they mean by the patient list.
4. The authors have used open-ended questions. What were these questions and how they were analyzed? The process of content analysis should be explained more accurately.
5. Results are described sufficiently otherwise, but in the last paragraph there are percentages without numbers. It would be better to present, for instance: … 76% (n= ) …., versus 56% (n=).
6. In the discussion chapter, in the second paragraph the authors write that the FDs were interviewed. If this is in question about this study, according to the method section, the doctors answered to the questionnaire. They were not interviewed.
7. In the discussion, there are same matters to which would have been paid more attention:
   - the results should be pondered more in the light of the international literate, how these thinks are in other countries compared the own situation.
   - what kind of training doctor need and how to develop doctor education to respond to there requirements

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
1. In the fourth paragraph in the discussion there is an utterance “In a similar study”,… If this is in question about this study, this utterance is not good in this place.
2. There are some spelling mistakes.
Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

**What next?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No

**Declaration of competing interests:**

None