Reviewer’s report

Title: Satellite clinics in academic ophthalmology programs

Version: 2 Date: 16 May 2013

Reviewer: John Lawrenson

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Major compulsory revisions:

1. The research questions are not clearly well defined although this is implied in the narrative. The aims of the study should be clearly stated.

2. At this stage the findings are exploratory and one of the major weaknesses of the study has been acknowledged by the author. The opinions expressed are those of a self-selected group of department chairs or vice chairs who may not be a representative. Furthermore, the views of department leaders interviewed may not reflect the views of other clinicians and staff within the satellite clinic. Therefore the study should be described as exploratory and this should be reflected in the title e.g. ‘Satellite clinics in academic ophthalmology programs: an exploratory study of successes and challenges’. It potentially forms the basis of a more comprehensive and systematic study that could encompass a representative sample of staff and faculty members. The discussion should include a longer section on the limitations of the study.

3. The reporting of the quantitative methods is poor and does not comply with accepted criteria for reporting eg COREQ. There are a number of unanswered questions which makes it difficult to assess the risk of bias:

   The following questions should be considered for a more accurate description of the methods.

   Who conducted the interviews?

   What was their profession? and What was the extent of previous interactions with participants (was the interviewer the study author?)

   Was was there any potential for pre-conceived bias of the interviewer (e.g. previous experience/knowledge of satellite clinics)

   How many potential participants were originally approached? How many refused?

   How was the interview guide developed?

   How was the data analysed? Was data saturation established?

   In the absence of audio recording, how was an accurate transcript produced (including the included quotations)?

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