Reviewer's report

Title: The emerging dental workforce: why dentistry? A quantitative study of final year dental students views on their professional career

Version: Date: 9 January 2007

Reviewer: Mike V Morgan

Reviewer's report:

General
This paper reports on a very interesting and worthy research project. The knowledge of career choice by dental students is poorly understood and is dominated by a number of myths that are not substantiated. This paper addresses the shortfall in information and does it very well. The statistical methodology is appropriately sophisticated and is reported in a clear manner in the text. The comments I have are largely to do with clarity of the results or minor editorial matters.

1. The paper is very long and at times repetitive. The authors might consider areas where the text is not necessarily pertinent to the aims of the study. This is particularly the case in the discussion where reductions could be made.

2. The authors emphasise (in both the abstract and the results) that "the single major influence on choice of career was a desire to work with people". The finding from the logistic regression was reported in the text without supporting data in tabular format. This finding might be better reported prior to the Factor analysis results, which in my view are the more interesting.

3. No mention is made of the place of birth of the respondents in the study. Do the authors consider this an important determinant as opposed to ethnicity? Potential students who are from families with generational history in the UK might have differing influences on their choices than those who are relatively recent arrivals.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Some of the text requires rewording

a. Abstract Page 1, para 1 – last line “choice of career in relation to sex, ethnicity and mode of entry” appears a few times and is rather clumsy

b. Abstract Conclusions, last line – not sure what “future motivation of the profession” means

c. Introduction Page 3, first line – “human resources” – unclear what is meant

d. Introduction Page 3 – “with the state across Europe” – unclear

e. Page 3, para 2 – “futures thinking” - ?

f. Page 4, 3rd para – “albeit that it few studies” - ?

g. Page 5 – top para – King's therefore well placed to examine” - ?

h. Page 10, top para – “although none [neither?] of these variables were shown to have an (influential) effec on the [professional] job factor

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.