Reviewer's report

Title: The views of doctors in their first year of medical practice on the lasting impact of a preparation for house officer course they undertook as final year medical students

Version: 1 Date: 29 December 2009

Reviewer: Colin Melville

Reviewer's report:

General Comments
This is an interesting and important study as it highlights the confusion that exists about the purpose of shadowing, and the potential tension between the GMC requirements for preparedness of graduates, and the Institutions academic requirements (of the degree course).

Major Compulsory Revisions
In the discussion there is no mention of the rationale for the taught and shadowing components of the four week course, or why duplication occurred between the two, or how this might be addressed. There is no comment on the content of the taught course and how its content was decided: the most useful content appears to have been that which meets the GMC requirements of Tomorrows Doctors for shadowing – this point should be made in the conclusion. Some conclusion on the structure of the course should arise from the data presented.

The commentary on types of knowledge seems relevant, but the topic seems to be covered quite superficially.

I am not aware that Kirkpatricks Levels of Evaluation have been called a triangle, this needs amending and referencing. The extent to which this study is measuring level 2, 3 or 4 would need to be discussed.

Minor essential Revisions
Aims: The first aim appears to be two different aims, and for clarity these could be separated, particularly as they do not appear to have been developed together.

P5 para 1: replace ‘their third attachment’ with ‘the final four month post’ (the former sounds too much like they are still medical students. You may also wish to consider explain the way in which the UK F1 programme is delivered in Nottingham/Trent for further clarification. (same issue in line 5/6).

Discretionary Revisions
Results: I think that the word ‘found’ would be better replaced with ‘perceived’, since only the respondents’ views are taken into account.

P3 para2: It would be useful to specify the purpose of shadowing as set out by
Tomorrows Doctors (para 51, p 20) – your results accord closely with these aims.
P3 para2: ‘in order to smooth’ implies that it does, consider ‘with the aim of smoothing’.
P4 para 1: see comments on results – the F1 perception of achievement does not necessarily mean it was achieved.
P4 para2: Is it evaluating the importance, or the perception of importance of forms of knowledge?
P7 para1: see comment on P3 para2 – this accords closely with the GMC purpose of shadowing

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests