Reviewer's report

Title: Trainees Own Perception of Delivery of Care in Diabetes (TOPDOC)
Study: Protocol and methods for a national survey of doctors in post-graduate training

Version: 2 Date: 7 June 2010

Reviewer: Jon Veloski

Reviewer's report:

Overall, an important and ambitious study.

p 1 The title is a bit vague (Perception of Delivery of Care) because the study investigates self-confidence, training and current practices as referred to on page 5. Consider more inclusive title.

p 4 In second sentence the meaning of "incidence" is not clear. An increase in prevalence across age groups makes sense, but an increase in incidence implies a cohort and time frame. Please clarify the group you are referring to and over what time frame.

p 5 It is not clear how or even whether the survey design and the sample size estimate on page 5 consider the stratification of the population into different specialties and different training levels. It is stated that the authors plan to analyze residents in endocrine and diabetes separately, but what about other broad specialty groups? For example, one might anticipate different response patterns from physicians in General Internal Medicine to respond differently from Pathologists or Radiologists. Not sure whether this is critical, but there might be a statement in the Methods to justify the approach of aggregating all residents (other than Endocrine). At a minimum the power calculation needs to consider the stratification into Endocrine residents versus all others.

p 5 There is no mention of response rate. This is very important and needs to be addressed in the final analysis.

p 6 Description of "qualitative analysis" is vague and not meaningful. What method will be used?

p 9 The analysis plan refers to stratification (specialty, level of training, region), but the survey design and power analysis described above do not describe and consider this stratification. Unless this is considered it is possible that the sample size will be inadequate for analysis of breakdowns, and may not have adequate power.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Acceptable

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