Reviewer's report

Title: Global Health Education in Germany: needs, deficits and potential benefits - a cross-sectional study among medical students(Part 2 of 2: Knowledge gaps and potential benefits)

Version: 2 Date: 7 June 2010

Reviewer: Karyn Baum

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Please number your comments and divide them into

- Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The 1.4% response rate hampers the ability to draw any conclusions at a national level, though not to the same degree as in Part 1. As noted, even within the 1.4% response rate the data is skewed to several schools. However, with that being said, there is a reasonable number of responses to draw conclusions about German students’ interest in and knowledge of this area (because the authors are not drawing conclusions about individual schools).

2. Is there any evidence to support a link between learning about these topics and one’s ability to practice, even in an urban setting? Although it is clear that the CSDH believes this information should be taught to all students, they are an interest group. Their views may be skewed. Presenting additional evidence of the need for this training, or specific knowledge required within it, paired with the poor results on the knowledge test, may provide a more convincing argument.

3. Students who had completed a course in tropical medicine, while scoring statistically higher, did not raise their scores by much. This may be because either the current courses do not address these areas, or that these courses do not work. Which would the authors conclude? Of even more concern, those who had completed a global health course did not score higher than those who had not. So why should adding compulsory training in these areas be expected to work?

- Minor Essential Revisions

1. Consider condensing the introduction, as some of it reviews Paper 1 in the series.

2. Why is knowing what the Alma Alta Declaration is important? Would it not be enough to know that primary access is crucial to good overall health? I am struggling to find a link between the knowledge being tested in the 4 knowledge questions and the ability of a German medical student to be a good physician and provide quality care.
3. Questions ask if they should learn about SDH for the country they are going to, not all countries or even their own. Would a general question be better? Not really realistic to think they will be able to learn SDH in all countries.

This article requires minor editing on the part of the authors from grammar and spelling.

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

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