Reviewer’s report

Title: One year outcomes of a mentoring scheme for female academics: a pilot study at the Institute of Psychiatry, King’s College London

Version: 1 Date: 2 December 2010

Reviewer: Juanita Bezuidenhout

Reviewer’s report:

This is a very interesting article about a topic that has been of concern for many years. The results are promising and I look forward to an extended study. The research question is well defined and the methods are clear and appropriate and the data appears to be sound. Overall the discussion and conclusions are balanced and supported by the data. The limitations and future work are very well addressed.

I have the following comments:

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

1. The overall language is very tentative, especially in the discussion “might, perhaps” or similar sentiments occur frequently throughout. There is no reason to be so tentative and speculative. It detracts from the value of the paper and from the hard data. The paper will also benefit from some rigorous editing.

2. In the overview section of the Methods the following statement is made: “In 2007, when the scheme was set up, only 26% of professors were women, compared to 61% of lecturers”. It may sound redundant, but it will be valuable to spell out what the ration for men is.

3. Regarding the section on quantitative measures in the Methods section, I a table with the complete list of questions from the various instruments, will be valuable to understand the subsequent results. This will add more value than the existing figure 1. that depicts the flow diagram of the online survey completetion.

4. p6 par1 –quantitative measures: verb missing from first sentence

5. In the results sections under the heading “Mentees” the data in the first paragraph is given as means with a standard deviation. It would however, also be valuable to indicate the actual number of mentees who showed an increase in their respective scores.

6. In paragraph two of this section the last sentence reads: “Results from these sub-analyses were consistent with the analysis of the complete dataset. “ I do not understand what this means.

7. In the results section on mentors “a good relationship with my mentee” is
highlighted as a gain for mentors – under which of the subsequent four themes was this included?

8. The following statement: “In most cases, gains and expectations were similar but gains could also outweigh pre-mentoring expectations.” Is not clear to me. It seems speculative and I am not sure what is meant by “outweigh”.

9. The legends for all the tables and boxes must be self-explanatory.

10. In the discussion, p9 par3 it is stated that: “The apparent increase in self-efficacy over the course of our pilot mentoring study is an interesting confirmatory finding of the importance of this construct for female academics.” Is it appropriate to concluded that an increase in self-efficacy is a confirmatory finding of it’s’ importance.

11. On p10 under mentee expectations (par4) it is stated that mentee expectations were unrealistically high. What is this conclusion based on?

Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)

1. There were 2 mentees and 3 mentors who did not complete the baseline survey. What were their reasons? I assume they were not included in the rest of the study.

**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.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests