Reviewer's report

Title: The transition into veterinary practice: opinions of recent graduates and final year students

Version: 2 Date: 4 August 2011

Reviewer: Rosanne Taylor

Reviewer's report:

Major revisions
Abstract needs to be shortened

Minor revisions
abstract methods. Were the thematic analyses verified by replication
Abstract results. Clarify which cohorts are referred to- ie student vs newe grads not various universities
Abstract conclusions. " recent grads..... Singular is not plural are

Background paragraph 2
" have become increaingly present" does not accurately describe the vet ed situation as these GA are used in curriculum design and demonstration of outcomes for accreditation

Para 2 another major argument has been the high attrition rates from early practice shown in work of trevor Heath published in aust vet journal which was linked to poor early experience and lack of satisfaction with practice.

Methods paragraph 1. Clarify meaning of " students in the preceding cohort.."
Preceding this study?

Methods stats. Why were the two different analyses conducted on same data ?

Quantit data analysis. The discussions were transcribed ( not the groups)

Were the analyses of themes undertaken by one researcher validated by a second observer ?

how were the themes and sub themes arrived by input from more than one researcher? What were the measures of repeatability and reliability eg were findings replicated by one or more researchers and was data analyzed without knowledge of it's cohort source?

The question here is, how confident can we be that the qualitative methodology is sufficiently well described and robust to make it possible to replicate by others?
Results limitations

Much of this new material is discussion rather than results and needs to be moved

Discussion

Para 1 in discussing why the authors focus on attributes considered very impt - it's worth noting that these were attributes at the foreground of the student or graduates attention and focus as they struggle to reach level of desired competence- which helps to justify this approach to data analysis

Para 2 the literature on grad attributes goes much further than this discussion implies it reveals that GA are most effectively developed when they underpin not just what is taught but how students learn and become less effective when viewed as being external to the curriculum content. See simon barrie's phenomenographic research on grad Att A comment on this would link well to point in paragraph 3

Para 4. Statement implies it might be a local issue at UC davis where walsh study was conducted There is wider evidence than this that students are concerned a out technical skills while employers are much less so. See paper by Mills in Avj 1999 and Heath papers in Avj

Discretionary

**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.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare I have no competing interests