Reviewer’s report

Title: "What Do They Want Me To Say?" The hidden curriculum at work in the medical school selection process: a qualitative study.

Version: 1 Date: 27 February 2012

Reviewer: Saleem Razack

Reviewer’s report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions

REVIEWER’S COMMENTS: THE AUTHORS DO STATE THAT STUDENTS WERE ASKED TO PROVIDE THEIR PERMISSION TO USE THEIR ESSAYS IN ANALYSIS. WAS RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD REVIEW OBTAINED? IF SO, PLEASE STATE EXPLICITLY. IF RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD REVIEW WAS NOT OBTAINED, THEN AUTHORS SHOULD ALSO STATE THIS. WITH RESPECT TO PUBLICATION IN THIS CASE, THIS WOULD UP TO THE EDITORSHIP OF BMC. ETHICS REVIEW SHOULD ADDRESS ISSUES OF PERMISSION TO USE QUOTES ETC.

- Minor Essential Revisions

REVIEWER’S COMMENTS: AS THIS IS A QUALITATIVE STUDY, IT WOULD BE PERTINENT FOR AUTHORS TO INCLUDE A PARAGRAPH DESCRIBING THEIR OWN POSITIONALITIES WITH RESPECT TO THESE ISSUES, AS DOING SO WILL HELP THE READER UNDERSTAND THE TRANSFERRABILITY OF THIS WORK TO THEIR OWN SETTINGS. FOR THE THEMES THAT THEY INTERPRETED FROM APPLICANT INTERVIEWS, THEY STATE THAT APPLICANTS HAD A "SHARED UNDERSTANDING". HOW WAS THIS "SHARED UNDERSTANDING" REACHED? WAS IT THAT THEY ALL SAID THE SAME THING? WERE THERE ALTERNATE OPINIONS EXPRESSED?

- Discretionary Revisions

REVIEWER’S COMMENTS: NONE.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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.