Reviewer’s report

Title: Willingness to Provide Behavioral Health Recommendations: A Cross-sectional Study of Entering Medical Students

Version: 1 Date: 23 February 2012

Reviewer: Anne Gill

Reviewer’s report:

The question of interest is clear, important and supported by the literature. The limitations of the work are clearly identified and stated. The title is a precise representation of the content and the writing is clear, crisp, with good flow and logical progression. A pleasure to read!

1. Discretionary Revisions:
   I would suggest including the IOM report: "Improving Medical Education: Enhancing the Behavioral and Social Science Content of Medical School Curricula" in the references to further support the importance of this work.

2. Minor Essential Revisions
   In the Results section, the paragraph about population health knowledge seems to be an orphan. While of interest, it is not mentioned in the discussion. The author may wish to either omit the paragraph, or to comment about the relevance of these findings in the discussion.

Although the author clearly states that the data may not be generalizable and that this is a cross-sectional study, I am not sure what the implications are for teaching or how this information should be used by other institutions. The following questions are not intended to be required revisions rather examples of thoughts that come to mind while reading the article. For example, how do educators improve student counseling beliefs and practice? Is there a way to resurvey this cohort before graduation to assess changes in their approach to counseling since beginning medical school? If there were changes, what caused them to change? Where is it taught in the curriculum? Can the students identify where preventive health counseling was emphasized? Is there a way to evaluate student counseling practice in a clinical setting or with an SP?

Some comments in the discussion related to teaching methods or strategies for preventive health counseling (even if to say we don’t know) would be helpful.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.
Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'