Reviewer's report

Title: Ordering patterns for laboratory and radiology tests by students from different undergraduate medical curricula

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Reviewer: Natan Kahan

Reviewer's report:

This paper explores the association between modes of medical educational and prescribing-precision for laboratory tests and diagnostic imaging. The paper is interesting, generally well written, and addresses a subject relevant to medical educators internationally.

Major Revisions:
1. The hypothesis of this study is unclear from the research question as phrased in the “Introduction”. Was the research hypothesis that the ordering patterns would be “different” amongst VI students or was it postulated a priori that their performance would be superior due to “…early clinical experience and progressively increasing clinical responsibility.”?
2. Did the students know they were part of a study? Please discuss the chosen methodology and how it may have affected the results.
3. Did the researchers observe variance in the differential diagnoses reported by the candidates in the two groups? It would be interesting to learn if the students of one group were more focused resulting in fewer tests ordered to unnecessarily rule out potential diagnoses.
4. The authors should describe and discuss any organizational or managerial difference between the two settings which may account for portions of the variance observed. Is the organizational culture of one setting more cost-conscience than the other thereby influencing the prescribing patterns of the students evaluated? Of particular significance is possible variance in local strategies (managerial and educational interventions and/or performance indexes) to improve ordering precision which may have confounded these results.

Minor Revisions:
1. Pg 4, 2nd paragraph, 1st line: 90s not 90th. Also, did the authors intend to write “alas”?
2. Pg 9, 1st line: “from” not “form”

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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'