Author's response to reviews

Title: Few Gender Differences in Swedish Medical Students' Specialty Preferences A Study of Motivational Factors and Their Impact on Last-Year Students' Specialty Preferences

Authors:

Saima Diderichsen (saima.diderichsen@gmail.com)
Eva E Johansson (eva.johansson@fammed.umu.se)
Petra Verdonk (p.verdonk@vumc.nl)
Toine Lagro-Janssen (A.Lagro-Janssen@elg.umcn.nl)
Katarina Hamberg (katarina.hamberg@fammed.umu.se)

Version: 2 Date: 21 October 2012

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor(s) of BMC Medical Education,

We hereby submit an original manuscript with the title ‘Few Gender Differences in Swedish Medical Students’ Specialty Preferences – A Study on Motivational Factors and Their Impact on Last-Year Students’ Specialty Preferences’.

Today, women constitute about half of medical students in several Western societies but women physicians are still underrepresented in high prestige specialties like surgery and clustered in branches of medicine characterized by relatively low earnings or status. Gender segregation in specialty preference have been found already in medical school and previous research have not been able to show any changes in this remarkably stable and almost universal pattern.

American and British studies dominate the area of gender and medical careers. However, the social policies in the US and Great Britain differ from Scandinavian countries. In Sweden, paid parental leave and subsidized childcare encourage women and men to equally share paid and unpaid work. These types of social policies reasonably affect individuals’ behavior; how they choose careers and organize their private lives. Sweden is therefore an interesting place to study male and female medical students’ career preferences.

This study adds to research on gender and medical careers as Swedish medical students’ motives for specialty preference were investigated, probably for the very first time. Our results are of global interest as the study contributes to an internationally more diverse picture of medical students career preferences. We also look beyond the students’ individual choices and seek explanations for their preferences on a more structural level by considering choices as something that is shaped both by context and by individual preferences.

The questionnaire was voluntary and anonymous. All authors contributed significantly to the manuscript; they all meet the criteria for authorship as described in ICMJE Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals. This manuscripts has not been published and is not under submission for publication elsewhere.

We hope that you find the topic and the article of interest for your readers.
Yours sincerely

Saima Diderichsen, medical student and corresponding author

Corresponding author:
Saima Diderichsen
Family Medicine
Department of Public Health and Clinical Medicine,
Umeå University
S-90187 Umeå
Sweden

Telephone: +46 90 7853542
Fax: +46 90 776883
email address: saima.diderichsen@gmail.com