Reviewer's report

Title: Why medical students choose psychiatry - a 20 country cross-sectional survey

Version: 1 Date: 10 July 2013

Reviewer: Phil J.M. Heiligers

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory revisions
- Three groups of potential psychiatrists among students are presented in the background. The differences in influencing factors for these groups are not clearly found in your discussion. So, either the 3 groups are not that important (and you could give less attention to the differences in the background), or you point out in your discussion why you did not find notable differences between those groups.

- The method section presents all important steps in procedures. I only could not follow your last decision, in which initially the ATP-18 score was omitted (with reasonable arguments), but subsequently again added and examined (and for this decision I cannot find any arguments). To me it is not clear why you came to the final decision?

Minor essential revisions
- In the abstract 6 influencing factors are mentioned, but only 5 are described. Missing is 'psychiatry elective' (dedicated to clinical work or study elsewhere).

- In the background you mention the shortage in jobs in psychiatry in the UK (as an example). You could mention this subject in your discussion as a major problem, which could be explored in several countries, even before those countries try to increase the recruitment of students for psychiatry.

- In the result section no table was given on the subject of teaching exposure, attitudes & career choice. I think it would be nice to present this correlation table, because in the abstract especially these findings are referred to.

- In the discussion you present the unexpected finding that exposure to didactic teaching seems to decrease recruitment to psychiatry. It is not easy to point out an explanation for this finding. So, I would expect a recommendation for further studies on this subject, because teaching is a substantial part of the investments for students.

- In the abstract and discussion is mentioned that in your findings 4%, respectively 4,5% of the sample was interested in psychiatry. Why are these percentages different? I recommend not to differ on this point.

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 have no competing interests