Reviewer’s report

Title: Cultural competency of health-care providers in a Swiss University Hospital: Self-assessed cross-cultural skillfulness in a cross-sectional study

Version: 1 Date: 29 November 2013

Reviewer: Maria Chun

Reviewer's report:

Minor Essential Revisions

1. CCCS
   a. Because the survey assesses the perceptions of the respondents, this needs to be emphasized/clarified throughout the manuscript and on the tables (e.g., Table 2 -- "Perceived Cross-Cultural Skillfulness. . .")
   b. As the authors pointed out, assessment of effectiveness of cross-cultural/cultural training is lacking. Therefore, it would be helpful to include a more detailed description of the survey that was used. Parts of the manuscript give the impression that the CCCS was used (reference in the abstract to a "previously validated tool"), when actually only some of the questions/items from the CCCS were included.
   c. More details on the pre-testing of the survey specifically developed for this study would also be helpful (number of participants involved in the pilot tests, how decisions were made to include/exclude items, etc.).
   d. Finally, in the discussion section, include any plans to conduct follow up studies utilizing the tool and whether further validation will be pursued.

2. Differences between providers

   It was very surprising to learn that nurses apparently did not have much exposure to cross-cultural/cultural training as physicians. The manuscript hinted at this, but could there be a possibility that the nurses have a higher standard with regard to what constitutes cross-cultural/cultural training? Since this study took place in Switzerland, it could be that its nursing programs do not emphasize cultural competency training to the same extent in the U.S. where, historically, nursing tends to have far greater/more in-depth training opportunities than medicine.

3. Other comments
   a. For more specificity, you may want to clarify that the study (reference 11) noted in the discussion section involved general surgery and family medicine residents.
b. Table 1 -- section "a" is a little confusing. Instead of using "Ref." I would recommend listing the other option (e.g., report both "Male" and "Female").

Discretionary Revisions

The authors should consider including a copy of the survey as an Appendix or make it readily available to anyone interested.

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 do not have any potential financial conflicts of interest. But, I do disclose that I have collaborated with one of the authors (Alexander R. Green, M.D.) on a manuscript that utilized the Cross-Cultural Care Survey (CCCS). And, I also plan to continue conducting research involving the CCCS.