Reviewer's report

Title: A new tool to evaluate postgraduate training posts: the Job Evaluation Survey Tool (JEST)

Version: 2 Date: 29 April 2014

Reviewer: Deirdre Bennett

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Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. The objective of the study is clear and the case is well made for the need to quality assure training posts. An attempt to develop an instrument to support this, which is user friendly (short), reliable and valid is a useful exercise. However, the authors have not situated their work in the relevant educational literature. By drawing a comparison with PHEEM, the suggestion appears to be that this is a tool which seeks to measure the quality of the learning environment. The notion of learning environment and the tools which have been developed to measure it are not discussed. Specifically, a very obvious omission is the DRECT tool for the measurement of postgraduate learning environments.

2. The description of the development of the JEST is confusing in parts – linking both with a previous iteration with fewer items and also with 15 standards generated locally. The main issues, however, are that 1. the questionnaire development does not appear to have been underpinned by any theory of how trainees learn in the workplace and 2. There is no description of a systematic approach to the development of the 15 standards, such as for instance a Delphi process. This weakens the validity of the instrument.

3. A number of statistical approaches have been employed to demonstrate reliability and construct validity. It should be explained more clearly what each of these analyses adds. The factor analysis should be presented in greater detail to clarify exactly what approach was used and the Eigenvalues for each factor.

4. It is stated that ethical approval was not required as this was service evaluation. I would not agree that this is the case. There are a number of ethical considerations here. Firstly a very high response rate was achieved in the first two rounds of use of this questionnaire - how was this achieved? Was return of the questionnaire compulsory? If so, the responses may be biased. Were the questionnaires returned anonymously? If not what guarantees of confidentiality could be provided and how was the data handled? It is clear that there is potential risk to a trainee who returns negative feedback on the quality of a recent post. The relationship between the researchers and the trainees in this study is not entirely clear but if they were in a position of power relative to them then these are issues which require reflection and comment from the authors.

5.
Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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