Reviewer’s report

Title: The relationship between medical student learning opportunities and preparedness for practice: A questionnaire study

Version: 1 Date: 19 August 2014

Reviewer: Simon Watmough

Reviewer’s report:

Review for: The relationship between medical student learning opportunities and preparedness for practice: A questionnaire study.

Burford B & Vance G. Journal: BMC Medical Education.

This is a good well written easy to follow paper which I could recommend for publication with only a few minor alterations.

The title reflects the content of the paper.

The introduction clearly sets the scene for the paper.

I am not sure why the Foundation School is anonymous, though.

The methods and analysis used are sound and relevant.

The results are clear and easy to follow.

The discussion is good as well. Whilst focusing rightly on student assistantships the discussion could be expanded to include previous research about shadowing and a long shadow attachment which has been shown to give the experience to prepare students for these skills as first year graduates.

I think the points made about simulation are very important.

I think the only weak area of the paper is the conclusion. I always think future work sits better before the conclusion along with limitations. I think the conclusion is weaker by finishing on a question; personally, I like to see conclusions finish with a take home message from the paper. The final sentence would sit better in the discussion. Also, another limitation is that the graduates are self reporting before they have had a chance to have gained experience as F1s.

Although, this is an area which there has been a lot of publications on this subject using very similar methods in the last few years this paper does add to the body of literature in an important area and looks at it from a different angle as well giving a new perspective. It would be beneficial for the medical education community to see it published.