Reviewer's report

Title: Predicting Residents' Performance: A Prospective Study

Authors:

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Reviewer: Dr Stephen Borowitz

Level of interest: A paper whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Advice on publication: Accept after discretionary revisions

1. The figures need some clarification. The authors have conducted a prospective study of 277 intern applicants, yet on each scattergram, there are less than 30 data points . . . does each data point represent ten interns/residents? If not, how were the data points selected for display?

2. I would also suggest revising the x and y axis of figures 1 and 3 since it is not possible to have either an ISC or global clinical assessment score of less than 1.

3. I believe that figures 1 and 2 can be combined into a single figure, as can figures 3 and 4.

4. I would have a different interpretation of the data depicted in figures 1 and 2. While the authors have managed to draw a statistically significant regression line, if those interns/residents with ISC scores of 3.5 or above are deleted from the figure, I do not believe there is any meaningful correlation between the ISC score and their global clinical score. Moreover, having an ISC score of 1 (outstanding, extremely strong, or superior) did not predict clinical competence. As many of these residents had global clinical scores above 2.5 as below 2.5. Perhaps a better interpretation of these data is that those intern applicants with the highest ISC scores (3.5 or above) are not very likely to perform well clinically.

5. The author's did not answer my question as to whether any residents were asked to leave the program during the five year period studied, and if so, was the ISC score at all predictive.

Competing interests:

None declared.